



The Source of Defilement

Matthew 15:10-20

1. How to deal with a Pharisee (verses 12-14).

2. How to deal with your heart (verses 15-20).

As many of you know, before I became a pastor, my life was spent in the computer world. My job was to oversee the technical aspects of the computer network at a community hospital where we had about 500 hardware devices connected to our network. We had computers, servers, printers, routers, modems, hubs, and switches. Most of the time these devices behaved themselves, but on occasion things would go wrong. One time, it began with a few calls from our users complaining that their computers were slow. They were still able to do the things they needed to do on the computer, it just took a tremendous amount of time to do it. So, we told them what we always told people who had computer problems -- reboot. (Yvonne used to tease me that I had one of the easiest jobs in the world. When people called with computers problems, I would tell them the same thing over and over again: "have you tried rebooting?") In this particular case, after they rebooted, things were better but only for a few minutes. Then they called again with the same problems. It wasn't long before we were swamped with calls from other people who complained of similar problems. It was obvious that something was dreadfully wrong with our network. We tried and tried to figure out what was wrong. We spent the entire afternoon rebooting computers, servers, network hubs, and switches. We attempted to isolate the problem by dividing up the network, but we were having a very difficult time figuring out what was wrong. Finally, sometime around 10pm, we discovered the problem. It had to do with some devices that we had on our network called print servers. There were only three of these devices on the network. They were all claiming the same address on the network and were causing a huge amount of network traffic, which slowed down everything else. As soon as we took all of these devices off of our network, everything ran smoothly again. The problem was solved. It took a long time for us to figure out what the problem was. But, finally, we had figured it out, by getting to the heart of the problem.

We could have spent all of our time telling everybody to reboot their computers, but that never would have solved the problem. We had to discover the source of the problem. We had to deal with the source of the problem. I tell you that story because it illustrates our text this morning. In Matthew 15, we find Jesus getting to the source of the problem we all face. The Pharisees and scribes were all concerned about the outsides. They wanted everybody to keep rebooting. They were concerned with trying to clean up the outside. But, Jesus was concerned with getting to the root of the problem. Jesus was concerned to expose the heart of our defilement before God. I have entitled my sermon this morning "The Source of Defilement" because Jesus addresses the root cause of our sin problem. When we stand before a holy God, we are defiled in His sight. There is sin that needs to be removed from us if we would ever stand in His presence. The source of defilement isn't from outside of us. The source of defilement comes from within; it comes from our heart.

This morning, we will look at verses 10-20, which are really a continuation of our text from last week. So, it is important that we pause for a moment and review what took place before verse 10. Recall that these Pharisees and scribes took a road trip from Jerusalem to Galilee to check out Jesus. They were upset when they discovered that His disciples didn't wash their hands in accordance with the tradition of the elders (Mark 7:2). They were upset about this because they believed that if you didn't wash your hands before you ate, you were unclean before God. So, they approached Jesus about the subject and asked Him, "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread" (Matt. 15:2). Before Jesus answered their question, He first began to address the issue behind their question. This is typical of Jesus. Often, when Jesus was asked a question, He wouldn't answer the question with a simple answer. He often answered in such a way as to get to the root of the issue. This Jesus did in verses 3-9. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for holding so strongly to their tradition that it blinded them from the truth of God's word. And so, last week we focused upon tradition and its dangers. My points were the following:

1. Tradition can become all-important (verses 1-2).
2. Tradition can negate the commandments (verses 3-6).
3. Tradition can create hypocrites (verses 7-9).

Beginning in verse 10, Jesus turns his attention to the issue at hand which was the ceremonial customs of the Jews. The lesson today is quite simple. Defilement doesn't come from outside ourselves. Defilement comes from inside ourselves. It's not when you touch the wrong things. It's not when you eat the wrong things. Rather, it's when your mouth speaks evil things. It's when your heart desires wicked things. That is where you find the source of defilement. In this case, it's not when you fail to wash your hands before you eat. In fact, this is how Jesus will end His teaching on the subject, "to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man" (verse 20).

In verse 10 we find Jesus calling the multitude to listen to Him. He doesn't simply respond to the Pharisees and scribes alone. He wants everybody to hear this important teaching. Jesus begins by saying, "Hear, and understand." In other words, Jesus is saying, "Listen up, because what I am going to tell you is extremely important. Do you have a pencil? You might want to write this one down." Let's look at what Jesus says,

And after He called the multitude to Him, He said unto them, "Hear, and understand. Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." (Matt. 15:10-11)

After speaking these few words, Jesus apparently left the scene. Verse 12 finds us in private conversation between Jesus and the disciples. It seems as if they were reflecting upon what took place. It seems as if the disciples were trying to understand what took place. It was like a debriefing session with Jesus. I'm reminded of how after a basketball game in college, we would gather in the dorms with teammates and friends to talk about the game. We'd talk about the good plays and the bad plays. We would rehearse plays in an attempt to think about what took place. The situation with Jesus and the disciples isn't so much different. They were trying to understand what Jesus was teaching, and so they asked him two questions. One question is in verse 12. The other question is in verse 15. Jesus answers both questions.

Jesus teaches us two things. Let's look at the first one.

1. How to deal with a Pharisee (verses 12-14).

Although many of the conservative Jews living in Israel today are much like the traditional Pharisees, I know that you probably won't encounter an actual Pharisee in your lifetime. But you may very well encounter someone with the same characteristics that a Pharisee has. This person will think that he has life all figured out. He is very secure in His religion. He is convinced that his lifestyle is just fine. He is concerned only with external things. He is unteachable. He has heard the truth that your salvation is found only by faith in the name of Jesus, but he has rejected it. He finds your message to be offensive. He has continued to be hard against the message of grace. Verse 12 says,

Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" (Matt. 15:12)

This is probably a reference to verse 11. I'm not sure that Jesus' words in verse 11 will offend us too much. We don't find them offensive because we are twenty-first century Christians who have no dealings with the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament. But a first century Jew who heard these words would be stunned. If the Pharisees of Jesus' day would have replied to verse 11, they may have said something like this:

"Jesus, you have it the wrong way around. Defilement comes from the outside, not from the inside. You said it in the wrong order. You said that defilement comes from within, not from without. All you need to do is read the law to see the error of your ways. In Leviticus 5, God told us that we would be unclean if we touch any unclean thing. In Leviticus 11, God told us of the foods that were unclean and would defile us if we would eat them. Throughout the entire law, it is always the things that we touch and eat that make us unclean. Didn't you mean it the other way around?"

I know when I preach, I often will jumble words. When I am thinking Jesus, I might say Peter. I'll say that Jesus got out of the boat and walked to Peter. Rather than two fish and five loaves, I will make them five fish and two loaves. I know that this is my tendency in the pulpit. I'm trying hard to correct it. Please pray for me in this process. It happens to me at home as well. This past week Carissa had a Pinewood Derby race at the AWANA that she goes to. Her car was made into the shape of "Nemo" the cute little fish. All week long I have been calling it an "Elmo" car, rather than a "Nemo" car. We all slip in what we say. But, Jesus didn't make a mistake. He said what he meant and he meant what He said. He said, "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth" (verse 11). As Jesus said this, He was turning the whole law upside down. This statement here is very similar to the statements that Jesus made in the Sermon on the Mount. In that sermon, Jesus repeated the phrase, "You have heard it said, But I say to you" six times. Jesus was taking the law and pressing it further. Rather than dealing simply with the external acts of sin, Jesus took the sin deep into the heart. In this instance, Jesus takes the law and turns it inside out. Jesus points out that the importance isn't the outward things, it is the inward things that are important. It isn't what and how you eat that renders you clean or unclean. It is what and how you speak that renders you clean or unclean.

James, the brother of our Lord, knew this very well. He taught us of how deadly the tongue is. He said, "No one can tame the tongue, it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison" (James 3:8). Our tongues can fire off poisonous darts that wound people greatly. Parents can crush their children with their words. Church members can destroy the unity of the church with the things that they say. I have had things said to me that have hurt me badly. They have been discouraging. They have caused me to lose sleep. They have affected my attitudes toward others. I have said things to others that have hurt them badly. I have slandered others with my words. I have been loose with my tongue. I have done damage. Why is it that no one can tame the tongue? No one can tame the tongue because of the state of our hearts. Our hearts are poison factories that fuel the tongue. Where the words are unclean, it is a sign of a sinful heart. The sinful heart is what defiles.

The Pharisees were offended by this statement of Jesus. Jesus knew that these words would find resistance in their heart. I believe that Jesus was trying to jolt the Pharisees. You get a sense of this in verse 3. When the Pharisees initially confronted Jesus about how His disciples weren't washing their hands before they ate, Jesus said, "And why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?" (verse 3). The little word, "And," at the beginning of His response indicates that Jesus knew full well what His disciples were doing. Jesus knew that His disciples were breaking the tradition of the elders. Jesus had no problem with that. Jesus knew full well that the Pharisees would be offended by such action. The sense is that Jesus says, "Yes, My disciples are doing that, and why do you transgress the commandment?" Jesus was intentionally provoking these Pharisees and scribes. He was rocking the boat to see how they would respond. They responded poorly.

So, beginning in verse 13, Jesus gives a perspective of these Pharisees and scribes. He said,

"Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." (verses 13-14)

At the heart of Jesus' response are three little words, which are key to Jesus' attitude toward them. He said, "Let them alone." In other words,

Jesus said, "Don't worry about it. Don't worry about offending them. You need to leave them alone." Jesus gives two reasons why.

Reason #1 - They are weeds.

Jesus said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up." I know a bit about gardening. We have a garden that we plant each year. I'm far from being an expert. But, I know enough that when we plant our garden, we often get more than what we planted. In recent years, we have planted beans and tomatoes and squash. After a few weeks, we see beans, tomatoes, and squash. In addition, however, we also see dandelions, thistles, grass, and various other weeds come up in our garden. We didn't plant weeds. They came by themselves. They are unwanted guests. When they come, we pull them out.

Yvonne recently purchased some flower seeds to plant indoors so that they can be transplanted outside when the weather warms up. Hanna (our four year old) found out what Yvonne had purchased and asked if we are going to get the "fifles" (i.e. thistles). Hanna knows that when we plant flowers, the thistles will come, which need to be rooted out. It is no different in the kingdom of heaven. It is no different in the church. There are seeds that God plants. There are seeds that come into the garden by themselves. God didn't plant them. They planted themselves. They found fertile soil in the garden and began to sprout. But, since they are weeds, they shall be uprooted.

Those of you who are familiar with *The Pilgrim's Progress* may remember when Christian was walking along a path and spied two men who joined him on the path by climbing over some walls. Christian asked them where they came from and where they were going. They said that they came from the land of Vain-glory and that they were headed for Praise in Mount Zion. Christian questioned them about why they didn't come in at the gate since the master said to come by the way of the gate, since those who do not come by the gate are thieves and robbers. They said that the gate makes you go around too far out of the way. Besides, everyone from their country gets on the path by climbing over the wall just like they did. Now, do you remember the names of these two men? They were named Formalist and Hypocrisy. They were just like the Pharisees: externalists, who will always do the easy thing rather than face the hard work of the heart. They get in on their own terms in their own way. But the only way into the kingdom is for God to plant you.

These Pharisees and scribes will perish some day. Why? Because God didn't plant them. They saw all of this religious activity taking place. They liked what they saw. They chose to be part of this religious activity. They came to the meetings. They studied the Scriptures. They became experts in the law. But, it was all of themselves. God didn't plant them. God hadn't given them a new heart. They knew nothing of God's work in their heart. Sure, they had pretty well conquered the externals. But they didn't have a clue as to their internals, because they hadn't transformed their heart. This is why Jesus' statement of defilement coming from within offended them so badly.

Jesus had used this same illustration in Matthew 13 in the parable of the wheat and the tares. In that parable, God had planted the wheat, but the enemy had come and planted the tares in the midst of the wheat. The advice of Jesus was the same in both cases. When the servants came and wanted to root up the tares, the master instructed them to leave the tares alone (Matt. 13:29). In the instance of the text this morning, Jesus said, "Leave them alone. They will be rooted someday." Let's look at the second reason why Jesus wants his disciples to not worry about the Pharisees.

Reason #2 - They are blind.

Verse 14 says, "They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit." The picture is almost humorous. Those who are blind need a guide, who can help them, so that they don't bump into things. The whole point of having a guide is that your guide can see where you are going. But, if the guide is also blind, then, you are no better off than you were without the guide. In fact, you might be worse off if your guide pulls you into a pit. These guides may well claim that they know and understand and discern spiritual truth, but they are leading people astray. Why? Because they are blind to spiritual truth. Satan has blinded their minds and God has not opened their hearts to understand (2 Cor. 4:4).

You can tell when people are blind to the truth when you present the truth clearly and accurately and they deny it and are offended by it. And there are situations like this that you will encounter as you speak with others of Christ. You will put forth the marvels of Christ, how God became a man and walked among us, how He lived a perfect life, always living up to God's ultimate standard of holiness, how He was put to death by wicked men, but rose again from the dead, to give us hope of the future resurrection. You will tell of how we can have all of our sins wiped away by simply trusting in Him. You will explain that it's not the things that we do or say that make us righteous, that it's not our goodness that makes us righteous, but that it is only by faith in Jesus Christ that God has made us righteous by His grace.

If you are speaking to the spiritually blind, they may object to you at every point. They may object that God would ever become a man, or that Jesus could have been sinless. They'll claim that surely He sinned at some point, even once. Or they'll refuse to believe that He raised from the dead, or that sins are forgiven by faith alone. They may argue that there is something good that we have to do to show our earnestness, like attending church or praying or reading the Bible. They can't believe that their sin is as bad as you say it is, or that God can simply declare someone to be righteous when he isn't righteous, or that salvation is all of God's grace.

Such people are blind, like the Pharisees, who resisted Jesus at every step of the way. They denied His miracles (Mat. 12:24). They questioned His authority (Matt. 21:23). They pointed out when His disciples broke the customs of the Jews, like picking and eating grain on the Sabbath (Matt. 12:2). They "counseled together ... as to how they might destroy Him" (Matt. 12:14). They set themselves up as the teachers, sitting on the chair of Moses (Matt. 23:2), but failed to follow their own teaching. They eagerly searched the Scriptures, but failed to see the main point which was that the Scriptures spoke of Jesus (John 5:39). Jesus said, "Let them alone."

In your evangelism, you may very well reach a point with some people where you will "let them alone." They have seen the truth. You have modeled the truth before them. They have heard the truth. You have told them the truth. Yet, they continue bold in their own thoughts about what they think is true. You have been patient with them long enough. They have demonstrated that they have no interest in the truth. You should feel no remorse for leaving them alone. Jesus did this with these Pharisees. They were blind weeds.

2. How to deal with your heart (verses 15-20).

In verse 15, Peter asks Jesus a second question, "Explain the parable to us." You might rightly ask, "What parable is Peter talking about?" It is a legitimate question. We don't see in the context any mention of a parable. Much of it has appeared to be simple and straightforward. From Jesus' response to the question, we can conclude that Peter was talking about the parable in verse 11 that Jesus spoke to the multitude. Jesus marvels that Peter didn't understand. Look at verse 16,

And He said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also?" (Matt. 15:16)

In other words, Jesus is saying, "Have we been together all this time and you still don't understand? Weren't you there when I preached the Sermon on the Mount? It is the pure in heart that are blessed, not the pure in body. It is the merciful that are blessed, not the externally religious. Are you still lacking in understanding?"

Peter should have understood. We can sympathize. Perhaps there are things in the Christian life that you have heard for quite some time, but still don't quite understand. Do you understand how gracious God has been in forgiving you? If so, you will follow in His example and forgive others. If you don't forgive, you haven't understood God's grace, and may not even be a Christian (Matt. 18:35). Do you understand how God has been patient with you? If so, you will be patient with others. Do you understand how everything that you have is a gift from God? If so, your heart will be stirred to give. Do you understand how worthy God is? If so, you will respond to Him with all of your heart, soul, mind and strength.

Peter had trouble understanding what he should have understood. But Jesus, being the ever-patient teacher, explains this parable for Peter. In verse 17, Jesus says to Peter,

"Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?" (Matt. 15:17)

Jesus is saying, "Peter, let me teach you an anatomy lesson. Whatever you eat goes into your stomach. While it is there, the food gets processed. The energy from the food is taken out. Whatever the body cannot use from the food passes out the other side." Literally, the text says it goes into the toilet. It passes out to the sewer. Jesus is saying, "It doesn't defile you, because it goes in and out."

At this point in Mark's gospel, Mark adds the parenthetical comment, "Thus He declared all foods clean" (Mark 7:19). Jesus is rendering all of the dietary laws of the Old Testament as null and void. All foods are clean. You can now eat food from the animals that animals that don't chew the cud, like pork (Lev. 11:7). You can now eat food from the animals that don't divide the hoof, like rabbit (Lev. 11:6). You can now eat the seafood that doesn't have fins and scales, like shrimp or squid (Lev. 11:9). You can eat the predator birds, like the pelican or eagle (except in America) (Lev. 11:13, 18). Although I'm sure many of us have no desire to eat insects like ladybugs and Japanese Beetles, we are now allowed to eat them (Lev. 11:23). You can eat the moles, the mice, and the lizards (Lev. 11:29). Paul communicates this well in Romans 14:17, "The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit." The kingdom is not about what you eat.

This was a huge issue in the early church which had to sort through it. How do you mix a Jewish people who have never eaten these things with a Gentile people who have enjoyed these things their whole lives? In Ephesus, there were people who were advocating the abstaining from foods (1 Tim. 4:3). There were some people in Colossae, who thought that your righteousness was tied up in the things that you tasted and touched. They said, "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch" (Col. 2:21). Paul said that these things have "the appearance of wisdom" (Col. 2:23) in that they may be following the regulations of the law. In fact, some can argue persuasively that eating in accordance with the dietary laws of the Old Testament will help you maintain your health. Daniel is the obvious example of this. Rather than defiling himself by eating king's choice food, he requested a Jewish kosher diet. After only ten days, his appearance was even better than the appearance of those eating the king's food. Arguments advocating this diet have the appearance of wisdom, but in actuality, such a diet is "of no value against fleshly indulgence" (Col. 2:23).

It isn't the external things that defile you. It is your heart! This is what verse 18 says. Defilement comes from within.

"But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man." (Matt. 15:18)

Those who focus on externals tend to judge others on how much they taste or touch certain things. This is the primary danger in following these eating regulations: it focuses attention upon the externals for righteousness. But, our problem isn't what we taste and touch. Our problem is much more basic than that. Our problem is that we are sinners in our hearts. It is the things that come out of our hearts that are sinful. D. A. Carson said it well: "What concerned Jesus was not so much the form of religion as human nature."^[1]

Jesus simply is pointing out that people have a sinful nature. You don't deal with a rotten egg by painting its exterior nicely like an Easter egg. But some do this very thing. When someone expresses interest in Christianity, they are introduced to all of the things that you need to do. They might be told, "Stop drinking. Stop smoking. Stop going to movies. Come to church. Stop swearing. Dress nicely. And, most importantly, smile, as if nothing is wrong." They coat the eggshell with pretty colors by pushing a change in behavior. But **the message of Jesus is not a message of change in behavior. It is a message of a change in nature.** The point of verse 19 is that you need to realize that you need your nature changed, not just your behavior.

Jesus said,

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders." (Matt. 15:19).

Don't think that this list is exhaustive, as if these are the only sins that come from the heart. Like most lists given in the Bible, this list is suggestive. It simply gives examples. Jesus identifies here seven deadly sins. They all flow from the heart. The reason we sinned is not because someone forced us to sin. It's not because of something in the past that happened to us. It's not because we accidentally slipped. It's not because we had no choice but to sin. It's not because we weren't smart enough to understand what we were doing. It is not because we just can't help ourselves or because our parents did something to us to make us sin. **We sin because we have an evil heart.** We sin because we are sinners. We don't have excuses. Sure, there may be influences in your life or in your past that have helped lead you to sin. Perhaps sin was more readily accessible, as you observed it daily. But, that doesn't give you an excuse. You sin because you have an evil heart.

Our society loves to blame others for our misfortunes. We turn sin into syndromes. We turn disobedience into disorders. We turn lusts into addictions. We turn alcoholism into a disease on the order of cancer. But at some point, you need to take personal responsibility for your sins. At some point, you need to come to the point where you admit that you are a rotten egg that needs purification on the inside, not painting on the outside.

You can trace every single sin you commit back to the corruption of the heart. Let's take the seven that Jesus spoke about.

- 1. Evil thoughts** - Where do evil thoughts come from? They come from an evil heart. They come from evil desires that begin to dwell upon them in the mind.
- 2. Murders** - Why do people murder one another? Because of hatred in the heart. James said, "What is the source of quarrels and conflicts among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? You lust and do not have; so you commit murder" (James 4:1-2).
- 3. Adulteries** - Why do people commit adultery? Because they aren't satisfied with their own husband or wife. Their heart desires something else. So, they go and seek their satisfactions elsewhere.
- 4. Fornications** - Why do people commit fornication (which is any sexual activity outside of marriage)? It is the lust of the flesh that comes from the heart. The heart seeks pleasure, rather than purity.
- 5. Thefts** - Why do people steal? Because their heart wants something that they don't have. James say, "You are envious and cannot obtain; so you fight and quarrel" (James 4:2).
- 6. False witness** - Why do people lie? Because their heart wants to protect itself. It is easier to lie about the truth, than expose the truth and expose your wickedness.
- 7. Slanders** - Why do people slander others? Because their heart is filled with hatred and animosity toward others. The tongue simply follows the heart.

Sin has its source in the heart. This is the point of Jesus, ...

"These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man." (Matt. 15:20).

Christianity isn't primarily about externals. Oh, sure, some will try to make it all about externals -- what you can do, where you can go, what you can watch, what you can eat, or what you can drink. But, it's not about externals. It's about your heart.

At the beginning of my message this morning, I spoke of the computer network problem that I had. To solve the problem, we had to remove these problematic print servers from the network. We had to rid ourselves of the things that were causing the problem. You have a problem as well. Your problem is sin. Your wicked heart is what caused the problem. To solve your sin problem, you need to have your heart transformed. You need to have God give you a pure heart.

I want to tell you another computer story. This might be a bit more friendly for those of you who aren't computer people. Some of you are computer people and some of you are not computer people. (My mother is not a computer person, as some of you know very well. She has told me on several occasions that the rule about computers is this: If you are older than 50, you don't need to learn how to use them. If you have been able to get through the first 50 years of your life without a computer, you can certainly finish your days without a computer.)

Well, our children are learning to become computer people. My oldest two children (Carissa and SR) have it down pretty well. They understand how the computer works. They understand how to start the programs that they use. They understand how to shut down their programs. Most importantly, they know how to reboot. Our four year old, Hanna, is just learning how to use the computer. Several weeks ago, Carissa and SR began to teach her how to use MS Paint. She has been doing a pretty good job of drawing circles and squares and lines on the screen. She has learned how to paint large sections of the screen different colors. She has learned how to start a new picture (by pressing ctrl-N, which stands for "New"). This past week she has been watching Carissa and SR work on with the paint program and draw some pretty neat pictures, which they have saved on the computer and used as the wallpaper in the background. Currently, our computer has a picture of six stick figures on it, each of which represent a person in our family. Hanna has been watching them do this. She doesn't quite know how to save her work yet. But, she is quite interested in learning how. This week, she was dutifully working on her paint program while Yvonne was in the kitchen. Then, she asked this question. She said, "Mom, how do I get saved?" Though Yvonne knew that she was talking about saving her work on the computer, she answered as if she was talking about her soul. Yvonne said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31).

It's the question that all of you must ask, "How do I get saved?" It's not your works of righteousness that will save you (Titus 3:5). It's not your church attendance or your Bible reading or your multiplied prayers that will save you. The simple plan of salvation that "whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). Those who call upon the name of the Lord are those who have hearts that have been transformed by God's grace. God promised Israel that He would give them new hearts. Ezekiel 36:26, "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh." This is how you solve your heart problem. God performs heart transplant surgery on you. He gives you "a new heart and a new spirit."

How's your heart? Has God given you a new heart? Or, is your heart and old, stony heart that loves to sin! Have you found mercy at the cross of Christ? It is you only hope of solving the source of your defilement, which comes from within.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on February 29, 2004 by Steve Brandon.
For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Carson, D. A. *Expositor's Bible Commentary*. Vol. 8. p.353.