

Dirty hands, dirtier dishes and a balanced checkbook

Luke 11:37-42 (ESV)

While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him, so he went in and reclined at table. The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. And the Lord said to him, "Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you. But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb, and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

"Cleanliness is next to godliness." – John Wesley, 1778

Psalms 45:8 (KJV)

All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.

We are hearing an awful lot about how to wash our hands, but we are not hearing nearly enough about how to cleanse our soul.

Psalms 51:6 (ESV)

Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Luke 11:41 (ESV)

But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.

In order to change the seemingly big things we do on the outside, Jesus commands us to clean out the small things we are holding onto on the inside.

Matthew 23:23-24 (ESV)

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cumin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy

and faithfulness. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others. You blind guides, straining out a gnat and swallowing a camel!

Our love for God is seen by how much weight we give to justice, mercy and faithfulness.

Justice

Krisis: separating, selection, judgement

The turning point in a disease.

John 5:24 (ESV)

Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgement, but has passed from death to life.

Mercy

Eleos: kindness or good will towards the miserable and the afflicted, joined with a desire to help them

James 2:8-13 (ESV)

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty. For judgement is without mercy to one who has shown no mercy. Mercy triumphs over judgement.

Our ability to demonstrate mercy flows directly from having received mercy ourselves.

Titus 3:4-6 (ESV)

But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Faithfulness

Pistis: conviction of the truth of anything

Conviction that creates character

Acts 15:8-9 (ESV)

And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us, and he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

1 Peter 3:21 (ESV)

Baptism, which corresponds to this, now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

If what you believe is not changing how you live, why do you believe it?