

Message #54**Matthew 14:34-15:20**

I am convinced that the majority of people in this world are interested in religion, but they are not interested in really being right with the Holy God of the Bible. When Jesus Christ was here on earth, the majority of people were interested in Him, they were interested in what He could do and what He had to say; but that is about as far as it went. Not too many were really interested in being right with God, by acknowledging their sin and casting all faith on Him to save them.

THE WAY THAT PEOPLE RESPOND TO JESUS CHRIST AND THE WAY HE RESPONDS TO THEM SHOWS THAT THE MAJORITY OF PEOPLE ARE RELIGIOUS BUT NOT REALLY RIGHT WITH GOD.

I love what one commentator said. At this point in time, Jesus had set his face “like flint” to go to Jerusalem. Time is nearing for Him to go to the cross and quite frankly, He is tired of surface-level people who really aren’t interested in being right with God through His sacrifice.

RESPONSE #1 – The response of the people to Jesus’ presence. **14:34-36**

When Jesus got back into the land at Gennesaret, which is on the NW side of the Sea of Galilee, word spread like wildfire and many sick people came out just wanting to touch His coat so they could be healed. Here is the point—all of these people want to be healed physically but they don’t seem to get the point that they need to be healed spiritually. The masses should have been repenting of sin. They see Jesus as a healer but not their Savior.

RESPONSE #2 – The response of the Pharisees and scribes to Jesus’ disciples. **15:1-2**

A delegation of Pharisees and scribes came to see Jesus from Jerusalem. The Jewish leaders have a book called the “Talmud” that features all kinds of man-made religious doctrines and instructions, which were taught to the people. The issue they allude to is the “washings.” The religious leaders had invented several religious rituals that included washing hands, cups, pitchers and pots (Mark 7:3-4). Here is the tragedy: these religious leaders need a relationship with Jesus Christ and the only thing they are concerned about is their man-made religious rituals that don’t mean a hill of beans in the mind of God.

RESPONSE #3 – The response of Jesus to the Pharisees and scribes. **15:3-9**

(Stinging Point #1) - You break God’s law, but you keep your own man-made laws. **15:3-6**

Sooner or later any person or group who follows religious traditions of men will violate the Word of God. If the person or group does this long enough, he will actually end up adhering more to their own man-made traditions than the Word of God. Denominations are notorious for doing this very thing. To illustrate the point, Jesus cites the 5th commandment (Ex. 20:12), which says “Honor your father and mother.” God’s Word was very clear on this point. In fact, His Word said if any child cursed his parents, he was to be put to death (Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9).

Now the scribes and Pharisees had invented a way to get around having to help and support their fathers or mothers. They said if you have really dedicated something to God, then you don't have to help your father or mother with it. They invented a loophole around the truth. Jesus said you care more about your own traditional beliefs than the Word of God.

(Stinging Point #2) - You Pharisees and scribes are hypocrites. **15:7-9**

The word "hypocrite" means play actor—a religious play actor. That is exactly what these Pharisees and scribes were. They should have been on their faces bowed down to Jesus Christ. Instead, they are worried about their own rules. Christ uses Isaiah to bring out certain facts about their hypocrisy:

Fact #1 - These people honor God with their lips, not their hearts. **15:8**

These people went to religious services and said words and sang songs, but their hearts were not right with God.

Fact #2 - Their worship was empty. **15:9a**

It was spectacular to see the clothing and rituals; all empty worship worth nothing.

Fact #3 - Their teaching is man's word, not God's Word. **15:9b**

See the point here—God wants His Word carefully taught and expounded in church and if worship is to be valuable, this is what must be in worship. God is not interested in your or my opinions.

RESPONSE #4 – The response of Jesus to the crowd. **15:10-11**

Jesus said the real issue of being right with God is not external, but internal.

RESPONSE #5 – The response of Jesus' disciples to Jesus' teaching. **15:12**

The disciples came to Jesus and said did you know you offended the Pharisees?

RESPONSE #6 – The response of Jesus to His disciples. **15:13-14**

Instead of Jesus saying, "Oh, I am so sorry I ruffled their feathers," He gets even tougher:

- 1) The Pharisees do not belong to God and are heading to serious judgment. **15:13a**
- 2) The Pharisees are to be left alone; we don't apologize to religious Pharisees. **15:14a**
- 3) The Pharisees are blind guides leading blind people to the pit of hell. **15:14b**

RESPONSE #7 – The response of Peter to Jesus' instructions. **15:15**

RESPONSE #8 – The response of Jesus to Peter. **15:16-20**

Jesus basically says to Peter, don't look at the externals; look at the internal. These are evil, adulterous, lying murders that pretend to be religious and right with God. But Jesus says watch what comes out of their hearts. They are not interested in the Word or will of God, and their deceitful and wicked hearts cannot be cured by external religion, but by internal cleansing.