

Diligently Seeking God (Hebrews 11:6)

PRAIRIE VILLAGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

Church Bulletin Articles from July 24, 2011

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Scripture of the Week



Matthew 15:18-20

“Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.”

In Matthew chapter 15, Jesus had an encounter with some of the religious leaders of that time period known as Pharisees and scribes. These men went to great pains to look righteous on the outside, but often they were wicked on the inside and therefore hypocritical. The Pharisees and scribes practiced and tried to enforce many religious traditions that couldn't be found in the word of God, and Jesus rebuked them for placing their customs above God's commandments. These traditions included a variety of ceremonial cleansings they believed were necessary to make people spiritually pure. Mark 7:3-4 says the Pharisees and their followers wouldn't eat unless they carefully washed their hands first, and they

also washed the cups, pitchers and pots they used for eating and drinking. These men criticized Jesus when they saw His disciples eating food without first washing their hands (15:2). But Jesus taught them that people defile themselves by what comes out of their mouths, not by what they put in their mouths with unwashed hands. The Pharisees and scribes spoke their criticism and taught their manmade traditions from out of their evil thoughts, not from pure hearts that desired to please God. The evil thoughts of our hearts are what lead us to commit all the sins we commit. These are the things that defile us and cause God to be displeased with us. If we want to be right with God we must learn to guard our hearts against evil.

Things That Defile

Jesus wasn't merely exposing the scribes and Pharisees for their hypocrisy in Matthew chapter 15. Our Lord taught us some practical lessons about the things that defile us in verses 18-20. To “defile” is to pollute or make unclean and it literally means “to make common”. There are things we need to avoid that can make us spiritually unclean and no different than all the other sinners of the world. First of all, we learn that the things that proceed out of our mouth can defile us. That means we need to get a handle on the things that we say to people. The Pharisees and scribes thought they were better than everyone else and they often talked to peo-

ple with cruel and scornful words. When we talk down to people and treat them as if their views and opinions are ridiculous or unimportant, we aren't behaving much differently than those hypocrites. Proverbs 12:18 says, *“There is one who speaks rashly like the thrusts of a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.”* We can either bring harm or healing to the hearts of the people in our lives by the way we speak to them. We should choose healing. Another thing Jesus teaches us is that we must guard our hearts (literally our minds) against evil. He said that out of the heart comes evil thoughts that lead to sinfulness, and these things defile us. Prov-

erbs 4:23 says, *“Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”* Our hearts can be the wellspring of life, or the derivation of death. These are life and death matters that require our careful attention. When we have evil thoughts we must make every effort to usher them out before we act on them. We need to replace the evil thoughts with prayer and righteous, positive thoughts and dwell on those instead (Philippians 4:6-8). We also need to limit our exposure to worldly friends and shows and songs that influence our thoughts so greatly (1 Corinthians 15:33). Do you guard your heart or leave it wide open to sin's defilement?

Please Come Visit Us At...

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Times of Services

Sunday Morning Bible Study.....9:30

Sunday Morning Worship Service.....10:30

Sunday Evening Worship Service.....6:30

Wednesday Evening Bible Study.....7:30



Things That Deceive

Deception is one of the most potent weapons in Satan’s arsenal with which he uses to assault us. Satan deceived the first man and woman with smooth words that enticed them into disobeying God and ruining their relationship with Him (2 Corinthians 11:3). The truth of the matter is that people are much more gullible and susceptible to Satan’s craftiness than we want to admit. We would like to think we’re too smart and strong to be fooled by Satan’s slyness. But when we think that way, just like our original parents, we become very vulnerable to his attacks. The Bible abounds with ample warnings about the dangers of being deceived. In fact, four separate times in the New Testament we find the exact phrase, “Do not be deceived.” The reason for these warnings is obvious—people are easily

deceived. Let’s consider some of the things that deceive us and cause us to disobey our heavenly Father. First of all, sin is very deceptive. God warns us in the Bible not to be “hardened by the deceitfulness of sin” in Hebrews 3:13. When we are tempted to sin, Satan tricks us into thinking that sin is no big deal. Sin deceives us into thinking that there will be no serious consequences for our actions, or that we are ready to deal with the consequences of those actions. It is often not until long after we have sown to the lusts of our flesh that we reap the consequences of its corruption. Disease, financial ruin and broken homes often lie in the wake of our fleshly pursuits. And even if we never suffer one earthly consequence, the spiritual consequences of sin will devastate us for an eternity in

hell. Material wealth is also a great deceiver. In the Parable of the Sower in Mark 4:19, Jesus said that the “deceitfulness of riches” can choke out God’s word once it has been planted within our heart, and can make us unfruitful for Him. Earthly wealth promises happiness and contentment, but those things can really only be obtained from a relationship with God. The worst deceiver of mankind besides the devil is man himself. Proverbs 14:12 says, “*There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.*” We usually think we know what’s best, but often we fool ourselves into thinking we can commit sin and not pay the price. Do not be deceived. The crooked path of sin leads to an eternity of pain and heartache. Follow God and do not lean on your own understanding!

GOSPEL MEETING AUGUST 15-17 WITH GERRY SANDUSKY — Please mark your calendars and make early plans to attend every day of this short, three day meeting with Gerry Sandusky of Madison Indiana. Brother Gerry has entitled this series of studies, “There’s A Great Day Coming!”. Each lesson will be taken from the New Testament book of 1 Thessalonians, and the goal of this meeting will be to motivate each one of us to live every day of our lives on planet earth as if it might be our last.