

INTRODUCTION: There are good churches, there are bad churches, and there are churches that fall in between. If being engaged in a local church isn't optional for Christ followers, then the big question that looms is which church one should engage with. There are many ways to answer this question, but in today's content we concentrated on how good churches think about sin and respond to those who sin in much the same way that Jesus did. Bad churches, on the other hand, tend to respond to sin and react to those who sin in much the same way as the religious establishment of Jesus' day. There was a stark difference in how Jesus talked about sin, spoke about sin, and responded to those who sinned compared to that of the religious establishment. In this message we learned that what we think of when we think of sin and how we feel when hear about or see sin is very important and very telling.

Why is it so important? How we think about sin shapes how we think about people who sin, and how we think about people who sin shapes how we treat people who sin.

DISCUSSION:

1. Why is it that the list of churches' favorite sins to preach against seems to change every few years? What were some of the one you remember throughout your lifetime?
2. In the message today it was said, "How we think about sin shapes how we think about people who sin, and how we think about people who sin shapes how we treat people who sin." Why is this important to understand as it relates to engaging in a world where many live with an opposing value system than Christ followers?
3. When you think of religious establishment in the 21st century, who comes to mind?
4. In Matthew 15, we read of how the religious elite had created their own system of doing things that in many ways allowed them to ignore God's clear commands. What type of loopholes have you used or heard of someone using to allow themselves to sidestep God's clear instruction on a particular matter?
5. What was so important about Jesus elevating sin from just a matter of action to a matter of attitude and nature of the heart? Why is it easier to fixate on individual expressions of sin than it is to think of sin as originating in the heart and expressing itself in many different ways?
6. Jesus spoke of sin as being a master that enslaves, a bully that harasses, a blindness, and a terminal illness that infected those in need of a doctor. How does this perspective change the way we think about sin, talk about sin, and respond to those who sin?
7. Why do you think people usually gravitate towards judging sinners rather than offering rescue? In the past, what has lead you to be judgmental rather than empathetic?
8. How was Jesus able to lead people away from sin and rescue them without making them feel judged?
9. How was it that Jesus cared more about the person being victimized by sin than he did his own reputation in the eyes of the religious leaders of his day? What might that mean for us?

APPLICATION:

Pay attention to how you talk about, think about, and respond to other people's sin. Try to create ways to intentionally begin to look at sin and respond to sin like Jesus.

MEMORIZATION:

Matthew 15:17-19 “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.”

**5 REASONS
YOU SHOULD
LEAVE YOUR CHURCH**

1. [Group]

We have been made a part of
the church, and we are not
designed to exist apart from it.

2. [Group]

Which church?

3.

SIN

4.

SINNA

5.

What we think of when we think
of sin, and how we feel when
we hear about or observe sin, is
very important and very telling.

6.

How we think about sin shapes
how we think about people who
sin, and how we think about
people who sin shapes how
we treat people who sin.

7.

Then some Pharisees and
teachers of the law came to
Jesus from Jerusalem and
asked,

Matthew 15:1 NIV

8.

“Why do your disciples break the **tradition** of the elders? They don’t wash their hands before they eat!”

Matthew 15:2 NIV

9.

Jesus replied, “And why do you break the **command of God** for the sake of your tradition?”

Matthew 15:3 NIV

10.

For God said, ‘Honor your father and mother’ and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’

Matthew 15:4 NIV

11.

But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is ‘devoted to God,’

Matthew 15:5 NIV

12.

they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. Thus you **nullify** the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

Matthew 15:6 NIV

13.

You **hypocrites!** Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: “ ‘These people honor me with their **lips**, but their **hearts** are far from me.

Matthew 15:7-8 NIV

14.

They worship me **in vain**; their teachings are merely human rules.”

Matthew 15:9 NIV

15.

Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.”

Matthew 15:10-11 NIV

16.

Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that the Pharisees were **offended** when they heard this?”

Matthew 15:12 NIV

17.

He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. **Leave them**; they are blind guides. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

Matthew 15:13-14 NIV

18.

“Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body?”

Matthew 15:17 NIV

19.

But the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the **heart**, and these defile them.

Matthew 15:18 NIV

20.

For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

Matthew 15:19 NIV

21.

The Pharisees’ view of sin caused them to see sinners as villains to ridicule. Jesus’ view of sin caused him to see sinners as friends in need of rescue.

22.

When it comes to sin...if your church talks, reacts, thinks, and behaves more like the Pharisees than Jesus...leave!

23.

24.