

MARSHALL COUNTY DEVOTIONAL PAGE

Our heart's treasure

"Then the Pharisees and scribes asked [Jesus], Why walk not Thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? He answered and said unto them, Well has Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." - Mark 7:5-7

A folk historian went into the Appalachian Mountains seeking to do an original documentary on the simple life of the Appalachian mountain people. After he met a few

families, he got their permission to come back with his camera and interview them the next week. Meanwhile, those families were very busy. When the folk historian returned to interview the people and take pictures. To his surprise, they were not their original selves. They cleaned things up, straightened up the barn, did repairs to the house, and everyone were dressed up in their Sunday's finest, not to mention that even their pig had a ribbon tied to its curly tail.

What an illustration of hypocrisy. The same thing happens in religion. Many church-goers give their Sunday morning appearance.

They dress up in religious garb and go through the motions of worship. They give the performance of being righteous on the outside by their rituals, when in fact God says that they are unrighteous on the inside (Matthew 23:27). Understand that religion is nothing more than tying a ribbon on a pig's tail to make things look godly when it is not. Before the All-knowing Almighty God, religion is a façade, because God knows the thoughts and intents of our heart. God seeks those "true worshippers" who worship Him "in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23).

In His Sermon on the Mount, religious hypocrisy is

precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ warned the people about. Jesus Christ taught, "Take heed that you do not your alms (righteous acts) before men, to be seen of them: otherwise you have no reward of your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 6:1). The Jews had the beauty of the Temple, the most exquisite rituals, chants, and sweet-smelling fragrance, yet Jesus Christ, some 14 times, called out the pious scribes, Pharisees, and priest as hypocrites. It was so beautiful on the outside, but He knew that their heart was far from God and they worshiped Him in vain. So Christ firmly warned His disciples not to fall into such

religious hypocrisies. You see, God desires a heart relationship – not religious performance. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, taught, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength..." (Mark 12:30). Jesus Christ taught about a "pure heart" (Matthew 5:8) and an "honest and good heart" (Luke 8:15). So where is our heart? "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). Is Christ our heart's treasure?

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