Awake O’ Sleeper
Matthew 15:1-9 (Mark 7:6-7)

Objective: Get folks to wake up and make their religious life real service to God.

Memory: Matthew 15:8-9.

Introduction:
1. Did you ever have someone ask you what you were singing or whistling, and not even realize you were singing?
2. We are sometimes like that in our devotion to God; We go through motions, say prayers without thinking about the words or meanings, sing songs because we are supposed to, forgetting that we are praising God, and even doing “church” or other “good” activities because we always have.
3. We need to be careful about “doing” church out of habit or ritual. We need to think about our devotions and make them real efforts to praise and honor and glorify God.

We need to make sure our service to God is real. (HOW?)

Jesus is scolding the religious people in this section of scripture because they are going through religious routines out of habit and tradition. We need to listen to Jesus’ words and make sure we don’t follow in those people’s mistakes. Jesus quotes to them from Isaiah 29:13 to highlight what they are doing wrong. Let’s learn from the passage two things necessary to ensure that our religious activities sincerely honor God.

First of all, from Jesus’ Isaiah quote, we should understand that for our relationship with God to be right and pleasing, it must

I. Involve The Heart. (Read Matthew 15:8)

A. More than “lip-service”.
1. Isaiah 29:13: God’s people were living in a spirit of ignorance. In a stupor as if they are blind or drunk. This is by choice!
2. Folks need to choose to wake up and pay attention! To NOT remain as they are.
3. “Lip-service” is like what happens in Matthew 7:21-23: “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’”
   a. Words were not real! God was not pleased. Folks were not saved.

B. Must pay attention to our words.
1. Actions need to match our words. “Do” what we say in our religious talk.
2. You say you are interested in Truth. Are you really? What do you actions show?
3. You say you’re interested in changing, growing, repenting …
4. You say, “Lord, Lord”, but don’t do what He wants, or only do what you want.

C. People’s hearts can get calloused.
1. Is yours heart hardened / drowsy? Does it take seriously the words of the songs you sing?
2. Everybody is saying it and you do too; w/o thinking! (Praise God. Thank God. Stop sinning…)
3. Wake up and realize what you are saying! Put some sincere meaning into it!

D. Relationship to God has to be more than “rote” service.
1. Let’s NOT repeat pat answers we have heard without the answers penetrating to our hearts.
   a. Answer in Bible Class is “Jesus” without realizing the significance of that answer.
   b. Really examine yourself during Lord’s Supper, not hurry through it.
   c. Mean what you say when you follow the one leading the prayer.
   d. If you take a prayer card; really pray for it. Mean it when you “amen”.
2. We look fit in rather than let the words and actions mean something in our hearts.
3. “Rote” is like telling someone you love them while ignoring them or romancing another.

In addition to being genuinely from the heart, our worship, our religion, our relationship with God must…
II. Be Sensitive To God’s Leading. (Read Matthew 15:9)

A. People tend to prefer familiar traditions.
   1. They can stay sleeping spiritually. No real struggle. Comfortable. We don’t have to think or grow!
   2. Traditions are comfortable, easy. My family is _____. We have always done ___________.
      Comfortable, but doesn’t make it real or truth or pleasing to God.
   3. Traditions may not be bad in and of themselves – many traditions are very good, BUT; people
      often put their own traditions ahead of God’s teachings. Their own preferences ahead of God’s.
   4. They are the path of least resistance for the most part and for most of us. But, when they conflict
      with God’s commands or instructions, they are bad and …

B. Human traditions are destined to perish.
   1. Colossians 2:20-23, “Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why,
      as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: \textit{Do not handle! Do not taste!
      Do not touch!}\textit{? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on
      human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of
      wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of
      the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.}\textit{”}
   2. Some may be fine and good IF they don’t compete or conflict with God’s.
   3. They will not serve to save you or establish God as Lord., so we need to…

C. Make sure it is God’s ideas we are following.
   1. Be sensitive to whether you are genuinely led by God’s will and instructions.
   2. Human traditions may be easier; especially if they agree with family, friends; BUT do they please
      God? Does the tradition exult God? Is it what He wants and has instructed?
   3. People tend to follow “church fathers” – someone before me set this all up. They must have
      known better than me.” (Why?) They must have been sanctioned by God (Why?) They must
      have been right with God. (Why?) Church Fathers are interesting, but they are many years
      removed from the Source. Think how much man has drifted in the last 50 years; Cf. Hippolytus
      describing the church in 215 BC; is it reliable, or is it scary that he is human and the man-made
      traditions are already some 150 years removed from the New Testament writers?
   4. Isn’t it better to go simply to the New Testament to see what God requires and expects so we don’t
      do like the Jews and \textit{nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition}”?
   5. Peter was strongly ingrained in the traditions of the “fathers” and of his parents and of his church
      and with personal habit; he struggled with the matter in Acts 10, but ultimately was sensitive to
      God’s preference and made sure he did it God’s way!
   6. People follow family traditions – I am “such and such”. Parents were, grandparents were and I will
      live and die “such and such”.
      a. Did you ever ask if “such and such was really God’s tradition? Teaching? Desire?
      b. Does it set aside God’s Word for the sake of some man-made tradition or idea?

So What?
   Does religion touch your heart, or is it just habitual actions and rituals? Is it real to
   you internally? Do you serve God with the devotion and sincerity of your heart? Many
   of us have been walking around, living our lives in a spiritual “stupor”. We need to \textit{wake up and realize
   the importance of worshiping God legitimately.} As the Apostle says in
   Ephesians 5:14b, \textit{“Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”}

Closing Prayer:
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Matthew 15:1-9 (Mark 7:6-7)

Reading: Matthew 15:1-9
Memory: Matthew 15:8-9
“T_p_h_m_w_t_l_, b_t_h_a_f_f_m_. T_w_m_i_v_; t_t_a_b_r_t_b_m.”

We need to make sure our service to God is real.
Two things necessary to ensure that our religious activities sincerely honor God.

I. Involve The Heart.
A. More than “lip-service”.

B. Must pay attention to our words.

C. People’s hearts can get calloused.

D. Relationship to God has to be more than "rote" service.

II. Be Sensitive To God’s Leading.
A. People tend to prefer familiar traditions.

B. Human traditions are destined to perish.

C. Make sure it is God’s ideas we are following.

So What?
Wake up and realize the importance of serving God sincerely. (Ephesians 5:14b)

Action: (Specify an action or change you will make in your life as a result of this message.)

Date: (When you will check to verify that you have done it.)