

Matthew 15:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

Analysis

Christ quotes Isaiah 29:13, highlighting the divorce between lip service and heart allegiance. The contrast between 'draweth nigh unto me with their mouth' and 'their heart is far from me' exposes the essence of hypocrisy. Reformed theology stresses that God examines the heart (1 Samuel 16:7); external worship without internal devotion is abomination. This verse demolishes any notion that God accepts mere formalism. True worship requires Spirit-wrought regeneration producing genuine love for God.

Historical Context

In Isaiah's context, Judah relied on political alliances and religious ritual while abandoning covenant faithfulness. Their worship had become mere cultural habit. Jesus applies this diagnosis to first-century Judaism, where Pharisaic tradition had replaced genuine devotion with mechanical observance.

Related Passages

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How close is your heart to God during worship services?
2. What disciplines help align your inner devotion with outer expressions?
3. How would you respond if God examined your heart right now?

Interlinear Text

Ἐγγίζει μοι Ὁ λαὸς οὗτος τῷ στόματι αὐτῶν,
draweth nigh **unto me** G3588 **people** **This** G3588 **mouth** **their**
G1448 G3427 G2992 G3778 G4750 G846

καὶ τοῖς χείλεσίν με τιμᾷ ἡ δὲ καρδία αὐτῶν,
and G3588 **with their lips** **me** **honoureth** G3588 **but** **heart** **their**
G2532 G5491 G3165 G5091 G1161 G2588 G846

πόρρω ἀπέχει ἀπ' ἐμοῦ.
far **is** **from** **me**
G4206 G568 G575 G1700

Additional Cross-References

Isaiah 29:13 (Parallel theme): Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Ezekiel 33:31 (Parallel theme): And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness.

Acts 8:21 (Parallel theme): Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.

1 Peter 3:10 (Parallel theme): For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

Hebrews 3:12 (Parallel theme): Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

Proverbs 23:26 (Parallel theme): My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.

Jeremiah 12:2 (Parallel theme): Thou hast planted them, yea, they have taken root: they grow, yea, they bring forth fruit: thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins.

John 1:47 (Parallel theme): Jesus saw Nathanael coming to him, and saith of him, Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!

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