

The theme for our morning's meditation is "The source of Truth and Purity is in the heart". When we hear about this theme we are reminded that the real source of truth and purity comes from within rather than without. Jeremiah writes saying that the 'heart is deceitful and beyond cure. Who can understand it?' In this context Jesus shows us that there needs to be a transformation of the heart in order for truth and purity to come through. The Pharisees and the Teachers of the law during the time of Jesus were interested in maintain the external purity with rituals and other acts. But they were never focused on internal purity and truth. In the Gospel passage read for us we notice that Jesus goes to the heart of the matter which is a matter of the heart.

In the passage from Matthew Jesus reminds them about hearing from the Ten Commandments that they were not to commit adultery. However, Jesus internalizes the law by saying that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. In other words, Jesus is saying that if we mentally think of committing adultery with someone then we have already committed the act. His standards go to internal purity rather than just committing that act. He therefore says that 'If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.' What does he mean by this? Is it something that we need to read literally? Are we supposed to gouge out our eyes or cut off our right hand if they cause us to sin or does it mean something else? Jesus is in fact asking us to go to the root of what is causing us to sin. If we deal with sin with its roots then we will be able to overcome it. We cannot do just cosmetic changes to our lives if we need to overcome sin. We are called to take radical action against sin. Just as gouging out an eye or cutting of an arm is serious business, so also we are to deal radically with sin. Only when we do this will we able to overcome sin.

Jesus then talks about the promises we make to one another and to God how we don't keep it. Jesus tells them not to take any oaths either by heaven, or by the earth, or by Jerusalem or by their own head. In other words there was no need for appealing to anybody or anything outside themselves to confirm their words. Jesus says that as his followers we need to have the credibility to such a high extent so that people will always believe us. We are therefore called to say 'Yes' or 'No' so that people would take us seriously. The point is that we are called to speak the truth always and therefore there is no need to appeal to anybody else to endorse that. Jesus says that anything else outside of that comes from the evil one.

Through these two texts Jesus clearly shows us that for purity and truth to be found in our lives we need the heart to be pure and true. This can only happen when we allow the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and transform our hearts. We cannot do this because of our own sinful nature. Therefore, let us ask God the Holy Spirit to indwell in our hearts and minds and lead us into all truth and holiness. The Holy Spirit of God empowers us in our moments of weakness and helps us when we are faced with temptations. May we draw strength from the Holy Spirit so that our hearts may be transformed and we will be true and holy.