

A SERIES OF DEVOTIONS BASED UPON THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD

Luke 11:39-41 “While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked Him to dine with him, so He went in and reclined at table. The Pharisee was astonished to see that He did not first wash before dinner. And the Lord said to him, “Now you Pharisees cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness. You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give as alms those things that are within, and behold, everything is clean for you.”

Ritual purity was demanded by the Pharisees. They would never have considered eating before washing their hands (Luke 11:39-41), eating in the home of a tax collector (Mark 2:13-16), working on the Sabbath (Luke 6:6-11), etc. Repeatedly they criticized Jesus for doing these very things.

In today’s devotional verses, Jesus addresses cleaning hands and cleansing the heart. Where better to go in the Bible than to David’s words in Psalm 51:10, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.” David prayed these words to Yahweh after recognizing his sin of adultery, repenting and seeking God’s forgiveness.

There was nothing David could do to the outside of his body to cleanse it from the impurity of his adultery. Neither can you. Yahweh, through Isaiah says to you, a sinner, “Come now, let us reason together, says the LORD (YAHWEH): though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. (Isaiah 1:18) In Revelation 7, John pictures an Elder peering into heaven and seeing a mass of people bowing and worshipping God. He asked, “Who are these, clothed in white robes, and from where have they come?” I said to him, “Sir, you know.” And he said to me, “These are the ones coming out of the great tribulation. They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.”

John wrote in 1 John 2:2, “the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.” All the hand washing in the world will never wash away the guilt and stain of your sins. Only washing in the blood of Jesus takes is able to do this for you.

Prayer and Hymn verse:

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.
Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with Thy free spirit.
Amen.

(From the liturgy, Divine Service, Setting 3, LSB, pp 192-193)