

## Have You Heard The Word?

Jesus makes an interesting statement to His disciples in John 15:3, “*You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.*” Now, without really digging into the context of this statement, just think about it with me for a moment or three...

He says “*the word*” (singular, as a *collective noun* encompassing everything He has spoken to them instead of several *individual statements*) had made them “*clean.*” This *cleansing power of the word* is obviously in reference to the *uncleanliness* (or *staining effect*) of sin on the soul. But think further about the implications of this statement...

It is “*the words*” of Jesus that *clean*, not the *miracles*. The *miracles* of Jesus generally did not *clean* those who saw them unless they, because of the miracles, *listened to* and *obeyed* what Jesus said. Note John 6:5-13 where Jesus fed roughly 5,000 people with *five barley loaves* and *two fish*. V.14 affirms that “*the people saw the sign which He had performed*” and said, “*This is of a truth the Prophet who is come into the world.*” Did witnessing and even benefitting from the miracle “*clean*” them from sin? They even believed and declared that He was “*the Prophet,*” and thus *believed* and *confessed* a measure of faith in Him. But again, did such “*clean*” them from sin? Let’s continue with the story...

The next day, “*the multitude... found Him on the other side of the sea,*” John 6:26. But He said to them, “*Truly, truly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because of you ate of the loaves, and were filled,*” vv.25-26. Jesus assesses and affirms their *carnality*- that didn’t really want *spiritual cleansing* from Him, just more food. He further instructs them (with words!), “*Do not work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man shall give to you,*” v.27. This “*food which endures to eternal life*” surely does not consist of grain and poultry, but “*the word*” that *cleanses* the soul and *prepares* it for heaven! In v.35 He brings it all home to and for them, “*I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me shall not hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*” But here’s the kicker...

Despite them having *believed* and *confessed* Him as “*the Prophet who is come into the world*” after witnessing the *sign* of the *loaves* and *fish* (cf. v.14), in v.36 Jesus states the truth plainly, “*But I say to you, that you have seen Me, and yet did not believe.*” Get that: they *saw*, and even *confessed*, but did not really *believe*. Why not? They did not **listen** to the word He spoke which would have *cleansed* them just like it did His disciples in John 15:3! How do we know this? Keep reading...

When this *multitude* “*grumbled*” at the words of Jesus in v.41, Jesus further explained what was happening, “*No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him,*” v.44. The logical question that follows is, “How does the Father ‘draw’ one to Jesus? Note carefully v.45, “*And they shall be **taught** of God. Every one who has **heard and learned** from the Father, comes to Me.*” One *hears* and *learns* saving **words**, and “*comes*” to Jesus for salvation by **obeying** them! It’s not enough to just see or even *experience* Jesus, one must *hear* and *obey* His *words* to be saved. How do we know this? Again, keep reading...

Jesus continued *speaking* and *explaining* the truth of the gospel (in *words*) to this multitude in vv.46-59. However, note that this *multitude*, and even some of Jesus’

*disciples* (not *twelve*, cf. vv.67ff) “*withdrew, and were not walking with Him any more,*” v.66. It was not the *miracle* Jesus performed to which they objected (or its *physical* benefits!), nor was it the *experience* of *seeing* Him in person that caused them to turn away, but it was, instead, His *word* that they rejected...the same *word* that *cleansed* His disciples that *heard, learned, and obeyed* it in John 15:3!

What about you? Is your “belief” in Jesus based upon His *miracles* and your “personal experience(s)” with Him, or *the word* of His gospel message and your *obedience* to it? Unless you *hear, learn, and come* to Him in obedience, you, like this multitude in John 6, are *rejecting* Him...and are thus NOT “*clean because of the word*”! Think about it, won’t you? Eternity hangs in the balance. (Philip C. Strong; Southport Church of Christ; 7202 Madison Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46227; online at [southportcofc.org](http://southportcofc.org))