

Worship (Clean & Unclean)

1 One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. 2 They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. 3 (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions. 4 Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, "Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony."

6 Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.' 7 Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God. 8 For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition."

9 Then he said, "You skillfully sidestep God's law in order to hold on to your own tradition. 10 For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.' 11 But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.' 12 In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. 13 And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others."

14 Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to understand. 15 It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart."

17 Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used. 18 "Don't you understand either?" he asked. "Can't you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? 19 Food doesn't go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer." (By saying this, he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God's eyes.)

20 And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you. 21 For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. 23 All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."

Mark 7:1-23 (NLT)

Observation (what does the text say?) **Interpretation** (what does it mean?) **Application** (what does it mean to me/us?)

Discussion/Topic Starters (Ice Breakers)

- To what foods did you grow up saying "yuck?"
- : What things in the text strike you or jump out at you? Why?

VI-23

- : What is the issue of debate between the Pharisees and Jesus (v.5, 2-4)?* How does the quote from Isaiah (v.7-6) address the issue at hand?
*another way to ask this could be: "What is the problem according to the Pharisees (v.1-5)? According to Jesus (v.6-13)?"
- : What practice/authority was more binding for the Pharisees, traditions or God's commands? Why?
How did they treat the O.T. (Note the verbs in v.8,9,13)?
- : What is the source of true uncleanness (v.15,18-23)?
 - l: Define each of the polluting acts that Jesus mentions in v.21-23.
 - l: If food doesn't pollute because it bypasses the heart (v.15), what kind of things do pollute the heart and mind?
Give examples, discusses how to potentially address these pollutants.
 - l: What was Jesus' view of the authority of the Law of Moses (v.10,19)? In light of this, what authority should Christians ascribe to the Old Testament?
 - l: In this passage, how does Jesus say both that sometimes people don't take Scripture seriously enough and that sometimes they take it too far?
- A: In what ways do we sometimes emphasize appearance over internal reality?
- A: What in your "spiritual/religious" life is comparable to the "age-old tradition (v.5,8)", i.e. rules or regulations not from scripture but from your tradition or culture? How do you balance these?
- A: When have you felt like "throwing in the towel" because of petty religious issues? What kept you going?
- A: What do you do to root out hypocrisy and preserve integrity, so your walk matches your talk/beliefs?
- A: What do you like best about what comes from within you? What do you like the least? How can you better influence what comes from within?

Recommended Follow-up:

- **Pray:** Pray as a group for pure hearts, not just outward appearances. This might be a good group time to break in in male/female groups and pray over v.20-23 stuff.
- **Respond:** Reflect on your heart, and how you are actively pursuing both good influences and bad influences on it. Journal, pray, commit to partnering with God to address these, feed the good even more and cut-off the bad.
- **Read:** Next week's sermon (8/29/2010) will focus on Mark 7:24-37, 8:22-26. Take time prior to next Sunday to read & study the passage, pray through the passage, meditate on the passage, etc.

* As discussed in Riverside's HGLT (Home Group Leader Training), these guides are to be starting points for home group leaders to develop their own guides and approaches to leading group discussions. This is a resource tool, not a rigid "go through this guide word-for-word." There are intentionally too many questions for a single home group time. These guides rely heavily on a few different study guides; including "LifeChange Series" (ISBN 0891099107), N.T. Wright's guide (ISBN 9780830821822), James Hoover's guide (ISBN 9780830830046), and the Serendipity NT for Groups by the Young Life ministry (ISBN is N/A)