

A Study of Mark – Lesson 19

Mark 7:1-23 That Which Defiles

⁷ ¹ The Pharisees / and some of the teachers of the law / who had come from Jerusalem / gathered around Jesus / ² and saw / some of his disciples / eating food / with hands that were defiled, / that is, / unwashed. / ³ (The Pharisees / and all the Jews / do not eat / unless they give their hands / a ceremonial washing, / holding to the tradition of the elders. / ⁴ When they come from the marketplace / they do not eat unless they wash. / And they observe many other traditions, / such as the washing of cups, / pitchers and kettles.) /

⁵ So the Pharisees / and teachers of the law / asked Jesus, / “Why don’t your disciples / live according to the tradition / of the elders / instead of eating their food / with defiled hands?”

⁶ He replied, / “Isaiah was right / when he prophesied about you hypocrites; / as it is written:

“‘These people honor me with their lips, / but their hearts are far from me. / ⁷ They worship me in vain; / their teachings are merely human rules.’

⁸ You have let go / of the commands of God / and are holding on to / human traditions.”

⁹ And he continued, / “You have a fine way / of setting aside the commands of God / in order to observe your own traditions! /

¹⁰ For Moses said, / ‘Honor your father and mother,’ / and, / ‘Anyone / who curses their father or mother / is to be put to death.’ / ¹¹ But you say / that if anyone declares / that what might

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have been used / to help their father or mother / is Corban / (that is, / devoted to God)— / ¹² then you no longer / let them do anything / for their father or mother. / ¹³ Thus you nullify / the word of God / by your tradition / that you have handed down. / And you do many things like that.”

¹⁴ Again / Jesus called the crowd to him and said, / “Listen to me, / everyone, / and understand this. / ¹⁵ Nothing outside a person / can defile them / by going into them. / Rather, / it is what comes out / of a person / that defiles them.”

¹⁷ After he had left the crowd / and entered the house, / his disciples asked him / about this parable. / ¹⁸ “Are you so dull?” / he asked. / “Don’t you see / that nothing that enters a person / from the outside / can defile them? / ¹⁹ For it doesn’t go into their heart / but into their stomach, / and then out of the body.” / (In saying this, / Jesus declared all foods clean.)

²⁰ He went on: / “What comes out of a person / is what defiles them. / ²¹ For it is from within, / out of a person’s heart, / that evil thoughts come / —sexual immorality, / theft, / murder, / ²² adultery, / greed, / malice, / deceit, / lewdness, / envy, / slander, / arrogance / and folly. / ²³ All these evils / come from inside / and defile a person.”

Questions

1. Jesus believed that religion meant loving God and his fellow men. How do you see religion?
2. What are some rules of another religion about food or beverages?
3. What is a hypocrite? Hypocrisy?
4. What does Jesus consider sin or unclean?

5. Why is this a revolutionary passage? Why does it truly anger the Pharisees and Scribes?

Vocabulary

1. **Hypocrite:** n. Somebody who gives a false appearance of having admirable principles, beliefs, or feelings. A person
Hypocrisy: 1. the false claim to or pretense of having admirable principles, beliefs, or feelings. 2. an act or instance of hypocrisy
2. **Evil thoughts:** Deliberately choosing to do something evil, first comes the thought.
3. **Sexual immorality:** Fornication. Sex for pleasure or payment outside of marriage.
4. **Theft:** Stealing. Robbery, white collar crime.
5. **Murder:** Killing another person
6. **Adultery:** Voluntary sexual relations between a married person and somebody other than his or her spouse
7. **Greed:** An overwhelming desire to have more of something, such as money, than is actually needed
8. **Malice:** 1. The desire to cause harm to another or others, or to see somebody in pain. 2. The intention to commit an unlawful act that will result in harm to others and does not have excusable cause
9. **Deceit :** 1. The act or practice of deceiving or misleading somebody. Also called deceitfulness. 2. something that is done to trick or mislead somebody
10. **Lewd:** adj., *lewdness* n. Showing an inordinate interest in sex or sexual excitement (disapproving)
11. **Envy:** The resentful or unhappy feeling of wanting somebody else's success, good fortune, qualities, or possessions
Envy: vt. To desire something possessed by somebody else

12. **Slander:** n. 1. The act of saying something false or malicious that damages somebody's reputation
13. **Arrogance:** n. A strong feeling of proud self-importance that is expressed by treating other people with contempt or disregard
14. **Folly:** n. 1. Thoughtless or reckless behavior or act. 2. A building of eccentric or overelaborate design, usually built for decorative rather than practical purposes. An undertaking that is excessively costly or extravagant, especially one that leads to financial loss or ruin.

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Notes

1. The investigators who followed Jesus wanted to see if he obeyed the oral tradition. Ceremonially clean means that the rules of the *scribes* decide if a person is “religious” and godly, rather than the rules of God, like the Ten Commandments.
2. The Old Testament, the *Pentateuch*, contains detailed regulations in moral matters. The oral law was only about 500 years old, and was written by the *Scribes*. Their idea of religion and pleasing God was to obey all the little rules; to break them was sin.
3. Jesus referred to the passage in Isaiah 29:13. Read it.