



Sermon Series: Mark: The Power
Sermon Title: Clean Hands, Dirty Heart
Date: 10/19/2025

Mark 7:1-23

Big Idea: Only Jesus can Make Your Heart Clean

In **Mark 7:1-23**, Jesus confronts the Pharisees for focusing on outward rituals while neglecting the heart. The Pharisees criticized Jesus' disciples for eating without following ceremonial hand-washing traditions (**Mark 7:1-5**). Their focus on external compliance, however, obscured the deeper problem: the heart. Jesus teaches that true defilement does not come from what enters the body but from what comes out of the heart (**Mark 7:15**). This challenges anyone who relies on tradition, routine, or appearances for spiritual life. True cleansing begins internally, and only Jesus can purify the heart, producing lasting transformation.

1. Is Your Heart Far From God? (**Mark 7:6-8**)

Jesus quotes Isaiah, emphasizing that the Pharisees honor God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. They prioritize human traditions over God's commandments (**Mark 7:6-8**). Even when following religious practices, they sometimes contradict God's Word (**Mark 7:9-13**). Spiritual activity—attending church, reading Scripture, or praying—is insufficient if the heart is disengaged. Rituals alone do not transform; intentional devotion to Jesus does. We must evaluate whether our actions flow from love for God or merely habit, expectation, or external pressure. When the heart is far from God, our obedience is incomplete, and our worship is hollow.

2. What is Coming Out of Your Heart? (**Mark 7:13-15, 20-23; Luke 6:45**)

Jesus clarifies that the heart produces actions, words, and attitudes that reveal our true spiritual state. **Mark 7:15** teaches that external things cannot defile us, but what flows from the heart determines our spiritual cleanliness. **Luke 6:45** confirms this, showing that a person's words and

deeds are the natural outpouring of what is inside. Good fruit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and self-control—reflects God’s work, while sinful behaviors—anger, envy, deceit, sexual immorality, or pride—reveal areas needing cleansing. Recognizing what comes from our hearts allows us to repent and receive God’s purification. Heart transformation results in authentic spiritual growth that aligns thoughts, words, and actions with God’s will. By reflecting on what flows from our hearts, we gain clarity about our spiritual health and the areas where Jesus needs to intervene.

3. Will You Let Jesus Clean Your Heart?

(Mark 7:20-23; Romans 3:20; Matthew 5:17; Matthew 6:6)

Jesus focuses on inner renewal over external compliance. The Law exposes sin but cannot cleanse (Romans 3:20). Jesus fulfilled the Law perfectly (Matthew 5:17) and offers the heart cleansing we cannot achieve ourselves. Non-believers need His intervention for salvation, while believers must surrender ongoing sin, relying on Him to produce good fruit. Private prayer and reflection, as instructed in Matthew 6:6, provide a setting for honest surrender, where Jesus can work deeply in the heart. Cleansing is not achieved through willpower, ritual, or good works, but by trusting Jesus to save us. This requires honesty, humility, and a willingness to let go of pride, self-reliance, and spiritual complacency. Only when we allow Him full access to our hearts can He remove sin and produce lasting change.

Spiritual growth is not measured by ritual or outward appearances. True transformation begins in the heart, shaping attitudes, words, and actions. Evaluating what comes out of our lives and surrendering sin to Jesus produces authentic fruitfulness. Only Jesus can make the heart clean; tradition, works, or effort cannot substitute for His work. By allowing Him to purify and guide us, we live out lives that honor God, reflecting His love, wisdom, and truth to others. This also empowers us to influence others positively, encouraging integrity, compassion, and Christ-centered living in our families, workplaces, and communities.

Discussion Questions:

- How do outward appearances sometimes mask the condition of the heart in your life?
- In what ways does Jesus redefine true purity and spiritual cleanliness?
- What fruit in your life reflects a heart aligned with God, and what fruit shows areas needing change?
- How can private devotion and prayer help maintain a heart that is clean before God?
- What practical steps will you take this week to let Jesus cleanse your heart and produce lasting change?