

The Gospel for the Dirty, the Desperate and the Deaf

Mark 7

Pray

I'm going to start with a question... Have you ever had every single one of your moves scrutinized?

- where somebody's just going over everything you do with a fine-tooth comb
 - trying to catch you in something? to bust you?
 - waiting for you to make a mistake & fail and blow it?

You know you might know people that are like that

- And that person is coming to the forefront of your mind...
 - you're thinking why'd you have to bring this up?

We're going to be looking at a group of individuals who are doing this very thing to Jesus

- the religious leaders and Jesus cross paths and have a collision

In **Mark 12:13** it says **they sent some of the pharisees to catch him & destroy Him**

In **Luke 11:54** it says **they were lying in wait for Jesus**

- **seeking to catch him in something he might say so they could accuse him**
 - so you had these top religious leaders of the day
 - very powerful very influential
 - and they were looking to capture Jesus
 - in something that he would say or do
 - in order to accuse him to get rid of him

Some of you might be able to relate, have u experienced that type of pressure

- to not make a mistake!

well the good news is Jesus wasn't going to make a mistake

- And the religious leaders of the day were very frustrated they were upset and envious of the successful Ministry of Jesus
- people were coming from every direction to be ministered to
 - people were being healed & delivered from demons
 - being provided for when they were hungry
 - and so news traveled fast & made its way all the way
 - to the capital of their religious system
 - which was in Jerusalem

and now a group of Pharisees had come out to confront Jesus

- and they were critical of the disciples whom they observed
 - as they were eating bread with unwashed hands

and not just your typical way washing with soap

- but I mean a traditional way of washing hands
 - if you didn't wash this way = you were considered to be unclean

well Jesus is going to expose the hypocrisy of the religious leaders!

- As they were placing their man-made traditions above the word of God
 - and unfortunately there are many religious groups today
 - who do the same thing

if our traditions ever supersede the word of God that's a problem

1 Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2 Now [a]when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, [b]they found fault. 3 For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands [c]in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

the Pharisees were what we might refer to as Ultra Orthodox

What happened is famous rabbis got together and they discussed the Bible, the laws,

- and they developed a whole system that they thought to them
 - was equal authority with the Bible.
 - That's called the oral law, the sayings of the rabbis.

So, the Bible says, "You shall not work on the Sabbath";

- what do the rabbis say "work" means?
 - Well, there's chapter after chapter after chapter, of their opinions & rules
 - They held the oral law to be as reliable as the Bible itself.

They came from Jerusalem to the region of Galilee to investigate the ministry of Jesus

- But they did not evaluate Jesus against the measure of God's word.

Instead, they evaluate Jesus according to the measure of human opinions

in **Matthew 12:14** we're told they made this journey **to destroy Jesus** to kill Jesus

They saw the disciples didn't go through the whole process of having their hands cleaned

- they way that they thought was right and so the pharisees are like
 - aha we caught them

they were accusing Jesus of doing something that was against their man-made traditions..

- **the religious leaders of the day attached greater value to the tradition of man**
 - **than to the written law of god**

In **Matthew 23:25** Jesus says **Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.**

if you got a cup out of the kitchen and it's all nice and clean on the outside

- but inside it's moldy = you're not going to drink out of it
 - most of us would say i don't care if it's a little dirty on the outside
 - i want to make sure the inside's clean

Well the religious leaders of the day were more concerned with cleaning up the outside

- but never dealt with the issues in their heart
 - they never dealt with the issue of sin

They presented themselves religiously but never dealt with the inside

I love what one Bible college teacher said, "If you are going to make an A in my class but an F at home or make a C in my class and an A at home, do the ladder."

Dr. Danny Akin, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

- Its more important to make sure our private life is good
 - Rather than just making sure our public life looks good

⁵ Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?" ⁶ He answered and said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me.' ⁷ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

- Why was Jesus so stern in his reply calling them hypocrites?
 - Because these leaders were far too concerned with not serious matters
- They were obsessed with image instead of reality.

it's possible to have the image of being religious or spiritual,

- but actually to be far from God.
 - And this was exactly the case with these religious leaders

I hope God wouldn't say, "They attend church, but their heart is far from me.

- They read their Bible, but their heart is far from me.
 - They pray really well, but their heart is far from me.

They love to sing, but their heart is far from me.

- this gets down to the root of what the Christian life is about?
 - It's a matter of the heart.

It's the heart that God looks for.

2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him

- Twenty-three times in the Gospels Jesus uses the word hypocrite.
 - Twenty-one of the twenty-three times he's speaking to religious leaders.

The Greek word means actors on a stage wearing a mask putting on a religious show,

- But corrupt underneath that mask,"

People who preach by the yard but practice by the inch should be dealt with by the foot

Jesus says you draw near to me with your lips but your heart is miles away from me

- you say you follow the Lord but it's evident from your life
 - that you really don't follow the lord

Sadly there are people like that today as they say the right thing

- praise the Lord hallelujah can I pray for you but their heart is far from Jesus
 - they don't walk with him

They are one way at church but they're a completely different person at home & work

- that's called hypocrisy & we should pray Lord don't let that be me
 - I want to be the same that I am in public that I am in private
 - the same person following Jesus

Do not tell my kids or the young kids to quote Mark 7 to their parents

- as an excuse for why its ok to come to the dinner table with dirty hands.
 - well, listen, Jesus said in Mark 7 that it doesn't really matter.

⁸For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.” ⁹He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ ¹¹But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, ‘“Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban” —’ (that is, a gift to God), ¹²then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, ¹³making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

The problem with the religious leaders is they had an external religiosity

- but no internal relationship
 - and that is what separates every single religion on the face of the planet today from Biblical Christianity
- it is not about the external = it's about the internal

in **Colossians 2:8** Paul said **Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.**

when you're looking to other people instead of god's word

- that is not something that we should be doing
 - you want to know what pleases god then you look in his word and you read it
 - because he's given His Word as our direction 4 life
 - so that you might know what pleases him

we don't want to be like the religious leaders of the day where we say forget what god says

- let's just hold fast to what we think is good

the bible gives us a very clear definition and understanding of what it means

- to live for the lord

¹⁴ When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand:" ¹⁵ There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. ¹⁶ If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" ¹⁷ When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. ¹⁸ So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, [and] thus purifying all foods?" ²⁰ And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, ²² thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

do you see what God is really concerned about? The heart.

- God wants to deal with our heart.

sometimes we can dwell too much on the outside things

- and not get down to the heart of the matter
 - which is really the matter of the heart.

the real cleansing that needs to take place has to take place on the inside

- we need a transformation and a cleansing on the inside of us
 - because the fact is you can clean up the outside of something
 - but if you don't change the nature of it
 - it doesn't change

let me give you an example of dogs

- all dogs have a dog nature and if you get them groomed and combed and cleaned and you get your dog smelling fresh but after that dog gets a bath and gets cleaned
- you know what often they'll do = he'll go roll in the bushes, dirt and mud after

for there to be a true cleansing for us it's not just all the outside it starts on the inside

- when the cleansing takes place on the inside by the work of the spirit
 - when my heart is cleansed and my mind is purified
 - then it makes its way to the outside

A good question for us to ask today is what's the state of your heart?

- I'll tell you how you can know what's inside your heart
- by what ever is coming out of your mouth is an indication of where your heart is
 - talking is like taking the bucket from in your heart and pulling it up
 - and whatever comes out is a revelation of what's in it

Jesus said in **Matthew 12:34** **out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks**

- so what comes out of our mouth is what's in our heart
- once we come to faith in Christ he changes our heart

- and once he changes our heart from the inside
 - now the outside begins to follow suit

and its good to ask the Lord would you purify my heart?

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
Be acceptable in Your sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer.

- I want the words of my mouth to be pleasing to God
 - Lord do the work within change my nature
 and he can and he will he just wants us to partner with him
- just to say Lord have your way in me change me and he'll do it
 - if you need some alteration today just ask the Lord he'll help you

now here's the problem we have with our heart in **Jeremiah 17:9** the Bible says **that our heart is deceitful above all things and exceedingly Wicked.**

- we all have a heart problem and for us to get our heart fixed
 - it has to be a work God and His Spirit

David understood that in **Psalm 51:10**. he said **Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me.**

- search me try me see if there's any wicked way in Me

Ezekiel 36:26 God said **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.**

they washed their hands but they never washed their hearts

- and the point is it's all about the inside

1 Samuel 16:7 the Lord said to Samuel, **"Do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."**

I'm going to skip Mark 7:24-30 for a MOTHERS DAY MESSAGE

**Faith that fights for her child
And the courage of a desperate mother**

³¹ Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee. ³² Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him.

Decapolis is a region made of **ten cities**, *Deca* means ten, *Polis* means City

- They were ten Greek cities occupied by the Romans
 - You might say it was Rome away from Rome.
 - For the Roman soldiers, the governors,

- it was a taste of Roman culture in a faraway land.
 - So Jesus went from one Gentile area to another one.
- and when he arrives as it seems to be the case every time that he arrived
 - there was someone in need

and it says that this man not only was deaf, he could not hear

- but also he could not speak properly

and so the people were asking Jesus begging him bringing this man to him

- **saying can you please heal him**

This man's friends bring him to Jesus.

- This man has two problems. He's deaf and he can't speak correctly.

there's so many people that I know today that are spiritually deaf & don't speak properly

- and they need to be touched by Jesus and we need to pray for those people
 - and try to bring them to Jesus so they could be transformed

³³ And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴ Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." ³⁵ Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

We all say "Oh, gross! Why would he do that?" Well, because the man is—Deaf.

- He can't hear; but he could feel. he could feel his touch.

This would be an encouragement to this man and would bolster his faith.

Could you imagine me praying for you and me putting my fingers in your ears like that

I think Jesus probably did this this completely new thing to catch the man's attention.

- He could not catch his attention with words.
 - And so he had to catch his attention with actions.

By the way, how hard is it for Jesus to catch your attention?

- You know, sometimes Jesus can't catch our attention with words.
 - We won't listen to the word. We won't pay attention to the word.

If Jesus can't get our attention with words, what does he have to do to get our attention?

- Do you ever feel that sometimes Jesus is sticking his fingers in your ears
 - to get your attention?

One thing we can realize about the healing miracles of Jesus

- is Jesus did not heal everyone the same way
 - Jesus uniquely dealt with individuals
- Jesus takes him away from everybody else, takes him away from the crowd
 - and he's going to do a work in this man's life individually alone

you know that's something that the Lord he deals with each of us like individuals

- because he loves us he knows what we need

- and sometimes the Lord has to take us out of the environment that we're in
 - in order to do a work within our heartand so Jesus Takes this man away from the crowd & heals him

- what an amazing thing this must have been
imagine you haven't heard anything your whole life

- you spent your whole life reading lips of other people
 - trying to discern what they were saying

when Jesus touched this man everything changed his ears were open his speech was loosed

God still does Miracles today & he is able to do things that no one else can do

The question often arises does God still heal today? the answer is yes

- he can & sometimes He does on this side of eternity
- in fact in 1 Corinthians 12 Paul talks about different gifts the of the Spirit
 - gift of tongues the gift of interpretation the gift of helps
 - the gift of administration and in 1 Corinthians 12:9
- he talks about the gifts of healings

James 5:14 Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord.

- we anoint people with oil we lay our hands on them we pray that God heals them

³⁶ Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it. ³⁷ And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Jesus tells the people after this man is healed hey don't tell everybody

- let's just keep it on the DL for now
 - but the people couldn't hold it back they told everybody what had happened

I love what they say about Jesus in verse 36. "They were astonished beyond measure, saying, he has done all things well."

- When you look at the work of Jesus? He truly does all things well.

Whenever you see the workmanship of Jesus Christ, its beautiful.

I think about the fact that the Bible says that Jesus created everything that has been created.

- You go to the ocean and you see the glory of His creation

You go to the mountains and you see the snow cap peaks with beautiful sunsets

- We look around and say, "Lord, you know how to make things amazing

You look at the human body and how how it works together

- and you say, "You've done all things well."

The work of God in redemption is far greater than the work of God in creation.

- What he's done in creation is impressive.

- but what he's done in redemption is even greater.

You look at our lives or where we were in sin and rebellion against the Lord

- and how it was the Lord who changed us.

He found us and he touched our hearts and he came to us and he worked on us

- and it's just a beautiful miraculous thing.

they couldn't keep their mouth shut! this was too miraculous

- they were literally seeing the Fulfillment of Prophecy unfold right before their eyes the prophet Isaiah said in **Isaiah 35:5-6** that when the Messiah comes

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened,

And the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

⁶Then the lame shall leap like a deer,

And the tongue of the dumb sing.

For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness,

And streams in the desert.

they were seeing fulfillment of scripture right before their eyes

- and they couldn't keep their mouth shut

and when God touches us when God transforms us

- when Jesus Christ gives us that new heart and we receive his healing his help
 - and his hope for eternal life we should be so blessed so thankful
 - that we just can't keep our mouth shut about Jesus

Pray & share Gospel & take communion