

The Jesus We Never Knew
“Cleanliness is not next to Godliness ... Dirt is”
Mark 7

God’s definition of what is clean or unclean is different from mans definition. As we seek to follow and know Jesus in a deeper and fresh way, what does He have to say to me today about the cleanliness or lack thereof in my soul?

How do I recognize clean and unclean?

1. Habitually look beneath the surface. (Mark 7:1-5)
“I can try to fix my problems with sin by looking to the surface stuff.”
2. Quit imposing my ideas on God’s ideas. (6-13)
“When I focus on the surface stuff, I can confuse my ideas for God’s.”
3. Submit to God’s surgical cleaning in my heart. (14-23)
“I can only get to the heart of my problems with sin when I realistically confront the condition of my heart.”

Mark 7 - Clean and Unclean

¹The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and ²saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were “unclean,” 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. ⁴When 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.)

⁵So 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 ‘unclean’ hands?”

⁶He 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.

⁷They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’

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

⁹And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!" ¹⁰For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' ¹¹But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹²then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

¹⁴Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.' "

¹⁷After 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 man from the outside can make him 'unclean'? ¹⁹For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

²⁰He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.' ²¹For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²²greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.' "

Mark 7: 1 - 23 (NIV)

Mark 7

Questions for personal or small group study and reflection:

1. When Jesus replied to the Pharisees in 6-13, He didn't really answer their question. Why do you think He answered this way?
2. Thinking through 7:6-13, the Pharisees had trouble differentiating mans ideas (traditions) and Gods ideas (His Word). What are some traditions that can threaten to be imposed upon Gods ideas? In my life? In the life of our church?
3. What was Jesus view of the authority of the Law of Moses (7:10, 19)? How are we, then, to see the teachings from the Old Testament?
4. Food for thought: This same Jesus who declared all foods clean, thereby overturning the Mosaic dietary laws (in Mark 7:19), also states that He had come, not to abolish the Law or the Prophets ... but to fulfill them. (Matthew 5:17). He charged the Pharisees with breaking the Law of Moses (Mark 7:9). How can these views of the Law be reconciled?
5. What, in your own words, is the difference between the Pharisees view of uncleanness and Jesus view (7:14-23)
6. Notice Jesus list of the things that flow from a persons evil thoughts. Which of these are problems for you? How do you deal with such things? Where can you turn for help when you are challenged in this?