

There Is Another Way
The Opportunity to Change
The Greatest Opportunity Series – Part 16
Mk 7:1-23
July 6-7, 2024

Introduction

- Who's Your ONE person? – we are now **6 mths into 2024** and we all had one assignment: Invite one person you care about to church. Halfway through.
- Learning and Relearning Truth – at church (under the Word of God) we all must put our **assumptions and understandings on the altar of sacrifice. We are here to be changed by the Word of God.** Some of us have to LEARN for the first time, most of us have to RE-LEARN what we thought we knew.
- Necessary Humility – there are **two passages that must be taken seriously if we call ourselves students of the Word and disciples of Jesus:**
 - *Is 55:8-9 – "...my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. ⁹For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."*
 - **Meaning** – this means that **we will NEVER fully understand the Lord and it would be arrogant to believe that we can outthink Him or challenge Him. It means that there is more than meets the eye. It means that the furthest our brains can go still doesn't begin on the pathway of God. It means we don't know what we are talking about and we need to be in a learning posture at all times.**
 - *James 1:22 – "...be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."*
 - **Meaning** – this means that **in addition to understanding the Word, which is only the first step, we must then implement it for it to be effective. Simply understanding ABOUT the Bible doesn't change lives. Living the Bible changes lives. This means that massive consumption of information is never as impactful as living a small portion of it.**
- To learn means to be corrected – **Jesus must always be allowed to alter our perception.** Why? Because...

GOD'S Way Looks DIFFERENT

- Recap last week
 - Jesus changes everything – Christian's reality is alterable
 - Feeding of the 5,000 – from Jesus to the Disciples/Us, to the world. Regular things in the hands of Jesus become extraordinary things.
 - Jesus & Peter walking on water – why did you allow your perspective of your circumstances to be more true than my word?
 - Did anyone receive a miraculous touch from the Lord from last week's prayer time at the end?

- This week – Mark is shifting gears¹ - Jesus' clash with the perspective of the religious leaders of His day.
 - Already clashed on:
 - Eating with tax collectors and sinners
 - How to fast with the right heart
 - What the Sabbath really means
 - How Jesus kicks out demons
 - We now shift to a battle over the concept of ritual clean vs. unclean

Lesson

- Holy Washing
 - Ritual Washing Traditions
 - Mk 7:1-5 – *“Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem,² they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.³ (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders,⁴ and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.)⁵ And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”*
 - ESV Combo Account - Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23 – Mark as the base
 - *“Now when the Pharisees gathered to Jesus, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples break the tradition (and) not walk according to the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat (but they) eat with defiled hands.” And he answered them, “And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For God commanded (through) Moses, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If anyone tells his father or his mother, ‘Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban’ ’ (that is, given to God) (and that) he need not honor his father.’ ”— then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother. So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do. You hypocrites!” And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: There*

¹ “The material of these verses has no definite connection with the preceding narratives and it is impossible to determine when or where the incident took place.” William Lane, NICNT

is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit." But Peter asked him about the parable (saying), "Explain the parable to us." And he said to them, "'Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it goes into the mouth (and) enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, "But what comes out of the mouth of a person proceeds from the heart, and is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, false witness, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

- Setting the Context: Oral Tradition vs. God's Law for the Jews
 - Core Problem – over and over we see **Jesus clash** with the religious leaders, namely the Pharisees & scribes. Why?² Because **they saw the expectations of God differently**. The **Pharisees and Scribes followed a set of rules and regulations that had been handed down to them from rabbis and teachers before them**. It was, for lack of a better definition, **the religious popular culture legalism**.
 - What God said – the **actual rules and regulations that God handed to the Jewish people directly were recorded through Moses and put in the first five books of the Bible**. It's call the Mosaic Law and the Levitical law but was really reduced down to one word for the whole thing: **The Law**.
 - What oral tradition said – after the 5 books of the Bible were logged by Moses, **ever since, the leaders of Israel began interpreting the laws and determining how they would work out in practical day-to-day life**. That's not a problem per se, and in fact, it was likely initially very helpful. Not everyone could read or study. But **what started great and helpful became a monster. The INTERPRETATIONS became just as important as the LAWS**. This means that **man's opinions became as important as God's opinions**.³
 - Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, - time and time again the Pharisees, who were the religious leaders (especially Jewish culture leaders) sought out Jesus, followed Him and challenged Him. Why? Because the people and the Pharisees thought that was their job. They were experts in the Mosaic Law and people trusted them to tell them

² "Its ultimate occasion was Jesus' evident disregard for the whole structure of oral tradition which examined virtually every aspect of personal and corporate life and sought to regulate it in a manner consistent with the Law under conditions often vastly different from those in which the Law was first handed down. In areas where the Law was silent the tradition was vocal, drawing the conclusions felt to be implicit in the mandates of the written code. The result was a vast legal complex, oral in form but definite in formulation, which was entrusted to the scribes, the recognized interpreters of the Law, and was regarded as binding upon all Israel." NICNT

³ "Theoretically, the oral law was a fence which safeguarded the people from infringing the Law. In actuality it represented a tampering with the Law which resulted inevitably in distortion and ossification of the living word of God." NICNT

what to do and what was right and wrong. Now, did God give them that authority? No. It was a cultural phenomenon. So, they thought of themselves as the watchdogs of Israel. They didn't like Jesus most of the time. He didn't play by the rules.

- with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, - the scribes were also experts of the law and tended to hang out with the Pharisees. It seems to me that the scribes were more Jerusalem bound and seemed to have a temple title, whereas the Pharisees were a movement sect that had clout, but I could be wrong about that. They tended to run in the same circles and it's hard to tell them apart sometimes.
- they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. – ritual washing was a HUGE deal to the Pharisees because it was all about being HOLY for them. They took the laws from the Mosaic era about cleanliness and expanded on it. Yes, there were ritual cleansing laws that the Jews were supposed to take seriously, however, by this time in history they had been expanded to something that wasn't intended.
- For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly,⁴ - Mark is speaking to a Gentile audience so you will see that he adds in some additional explanation like this. The 'proper' washing of hands had to do not just with 'washing with soap for 30 seconds' to get rid of germs, but a style of washing for religious purity and preparation.
- holding to the tradition of the elders, - the 'elders' is a way of talking about historical religious authorities, like rabbis. The Talmud and the Mishnah are famous Jewish texts that record religious opinions about matters and laws. They are the recorded 'oral tradition'.
- and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. – they wash after being in common locations such as the

⁴ "The biblical mandate that the priests had to wash their hands and feet prior to entering the Tabernacle (Ex. 30:19; 40:13) provided the foundation for the wide-spread practice of ritual washings in Palestinian and diaspora Judaism. At least as early as the second century B.C. many Jews voluntarily assumed the purity laws of the priests and regularly washed their hands before morning prayer. The accompanying benediction was designed not for the priests, but for laymen: "Blessed be Thou O Lord, King of the universe, who sanctified us by thy laws and commanded us to wash the hands."¹¹ The custom of washing the hands before eating bread was also grounded in priestly practice, in the conviction that daily food should be eaten as if it were priestly food. By the third century A.D. the eating of bread without washing was strongly condemned, and this seems to have been a tendency already evident in Jesus' day. The Pharisees surpassed the priests in their zeal to safeguard themselves from ritual defilement and were strong proponents of "the priesthood of all believers" in the sense that they considered the priestly regulations to be obligatory for all men. It is important to appreciate the concern to sanctify ordinary acts of life which lay behind this extension of priestly regulations to the laity. Its finest intention was the demonstration that all Israel was devoted to God and the Law, and the fulfilment of the injunction: "You shall be holy to me" (Lev. 20:26). The Pharisees were convinced that the strict discipline of human conduct was the necessary prelude to the true acknowledgment of God as sovereign. To restore Levitical purity after defilement it was necessary to cleanse by water, and Mark refers to the most common act of cultic cleansing, the washing of the hands, which was formally required only before the consumption of bread. The washing was accomplished by pouring water on the hands,¹⁵ and this fact excludes all suggestions of immersing the hands from Mark's reference in verse 3. The evangelist correctly specifies that a handful of water was required. The position of the hand was cupped, with the fingers flexed to allow the water to pass between them so as to reach all parts of the hand. By cupping the hand the entire hand could be washed with a very small quantity of water.¹⁷ A distinction was maintained between this type of washing, sprinkling, and bathing or the immersion of the hands up to the joint of the fingers, and apparently it is this third category of ablutions to which reference is made in verse 4 in connection with food purchased in the marketplace. Up to this point Mark's statements are factual and accurate. It is probable that a tone of irony is intended, however, when he makes a sweeping reference to the oral tradition ("and many other things there are, which they have received to hold") and concludes his catalogue with reference to the "washing of cups and pots and copper vessels." There may be here a certain justifiable impatience with the mass of detail which was later codified in the Mishnah tractate Kelim (Vessels), but it has the effect of exposing the oral law to ridicule. Mark's final remark serves to broaden the issue from the washing of hands to cultic cleansing per se." NICNT

marketplace because they had to touch things that Gentiles touched or non-observing Jews. This would make them, in their mind, religiously unclean, so they ritually wash when they get back to get all of that heebee-geebee juice off.

- And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches – it went beyond washing their own skin to washing things that may have come in contact with unclean people.
- And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands? – the Pharisees, like normal, accusingly question Jesus about why He is doing things differently than they do and that was handed down by tradition. They want to know why He’s not having His guys do that stuff (notice they don’t attack Him about it, so perhaps He would wash).
- Religious Masks
 - Jesus Calls the Pharisees on Their Hypocrisy
 - Mk 7:6-8 – *“And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written [in Isaiah 29:13]⁵, “ ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;⁷ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’⁸ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”*
 - And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you – The prophet Isaiah lived roughly 700 years before Jesus but he was super famous in the Jewish community. He was a major prophet and his words were recorded in the Old Testament canon. For Jesus to quote Isaiah would get the people to listen but how he interpreted Isaiah’s word to specifically rebuke them would have been seen as fighting words. He is quoting loosely from Isaiah 29:13.
 - hypocrites,⁶ - a hypocrite is a pretender. It’s not just someone that is failing to live up to their ideal (which is all of us), but someone who is willingly demonstrating one thing but living another because of a wanted façade. The concept comes from theater acting where people put on masks and pretend to be another character/person. Jesus is not blasting the Pharisees for simply not being good enough, He is blasting them for living a lie.
 - as it is written, “ ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; - Lip-service is saying something that your heart isn’t in on. It’s trying to get by with words instead of action. They say one thing but their hearts aren’t in it and they are just talking. Jesus is explaining that

⁵ “The quotation differs slightly in form from the Septuagint text and may have been drawn from a florilegium of prophetic passages used in Rome. It is probable that Jesus himself cited the Hebrew text or the Targum currently used in the synagogue.” NICNT

⁶ “5273. ὑποκριτής hypokritēs; gen. hupokritoú, masc. noun from hupokrinomai (5271), to act as a hypocrite. A hypocrite, one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character.” The Complete Word Study of the NT.

they are acting religious but aren't truly dedicated to God in these ways internally. They are living a show and they know it.

- in vain do they worship me, - worship by definition means, 'worth it'. It means that you value God and you are doing a demonstration of that. But to do something religious that is allegedly FOR God but you don't really think He's worth it, is not just wrong, it's in vain (empty).
 - teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' – This is the core of what Jesus is irritated by. They were teaching the oral tradition on the same level as the Mosaic Law that God defined. They were equating the words of mankind and God as if they had the same authority. That is never true.
 - You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men – When the two (oral tradition vs. God's Law) clash, they were siding with the mankind tradition. Jesus wasn't having it.
- Bogus God Bank Account
 - Jesus Rebukes the Pharisees for Corban Practice
 - Mk 7:9-13 – *“And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!”¹⁰ For Moses said [in Ex. 20:12], ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and [Ex 21:17], ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’⁷ ¹¹ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban”⁸ (that is, given to God)—¹² then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother,¹³ thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”*
 - And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! – Now Jesus was getting specific and personal in His rebuke. He attacks the ease with how they reject the words of God and put their OWN traditions (modern-day interpretations) in front of God. They are making up their own religion which is actually in defiance of God.

⁷ “The fifth commandment is cited in both its positive and negative formulations in almost literal agreement with the Septuagint text of Ex. 20:12a (= Deut. 5:16a) and 21:16. The second text indicates the seriousness of an offense against parents: the death penalty was decreed for those who cursed their parents or treated them with contempt.” NICNT

⁸ “Qorban is a technical term within the priestly tradition of the OT (its use is limited to Lev., Num. and Ezek.) where it always denotes an offering made to God. In Mark’s explanatory note the term “gift” is a technical designation for an oblation precisely as in the Greek text of Lev. 2:1, 4, 12f. A fine contemporary parallel to the use of qorban in Mark has been provided by a recently recovered Jewish ossuary inscription: “All that a man may find-to-his-profit in this ossuary (is) an offering to God from him who is within it.” The importance of this inscription is that it preserves the formula in its completeness and furnishes a concrete example of how the formula was used. It indicates that Jesus was referring to a dedicatory-formula which was commonly used by Jews in the last centuries B.C. and well into the Christian era. The basic purpose of the formula was to place a ban on something, reserving it for sacred use and withdrawing it from profane use by another person. The vow creates a prohibition with regard to an object and fixes upon it the character of an offering dedicated to God. This did not necessarily mean that the object declared qorban had actually to be offered to God; it signified rather that it was withdrawn from its intended use and was no longer available for a particular individual “as if it were an offering.” In the hypothetical situation proposed by Jesus, if the son declared his property qorban to his parents, he neither promised it to the Temple nor prohibited its use to himself, but he legally excluded his parents from the right of benefit. Should the son regret his action and seek to alleviate the harsh vow which would deprive his parents of all of the help they might normally expect from him, he would be told by the scribes to whose arbitration the case was submitted that his vow was valid and must be honored.³⁰ Jesus’ statement that the scribes do not allow him to do “anything” for his parents is not extreme. The renunciation of all profitability extended beyond financial support to such practical kindness as assistance in the performance of religious duties or the provision of care in sickness.” NICNT

- For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; - Then He gives a literal example. He cites the 5th of the 10 commandments about honoring father and mother. Everyone knew the 10 commandments.
 - and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' – He then backs it up with a quote from Exodus 21:17 which calls for the death penalty for 'cursing' their father or mother.
 - But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban" ' (that is, given to God) – But after realizing that God viciously was protecting the connection of parents and children, and demanding that children honor, respect, and care for their parents, the Pharisees came up with a loophole they created in their oral tradition to allow children to not honor their parents. It was a principle called Corban. The simplest way to explain it is that when a person wanted to keep something away from other people (not give it away, or not use it to help others), they would dedicate it to God so that it couldn't be used. But then they didn't really give it to God, they kept it, but now it was off limits.
 - then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, - When the religious leaders would encourage people to use this loophole they were blocking the commands and heart of God because it would dishonor their parents.
 - thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. – This was a perfect example of how they would use their own oral tradition in place of what God really wanted and really said.
 - And many such things you do – and Jesus points out, this isn't the ONLY example, and you know it!
- Inside Out
 - Jesus Teaches What Defiles a Person
 - *Mk 7:14-23 – "And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." ¹⁷ And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸ And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him,⁹ ¹⁹ since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods*

⁹ "With a mode of expression calculated to provoke thought, Jesus sets in radical opposition material purity and moral purity. The meaning of the first half of the riddle was intelligible in the light of the controversy with the scribes: a man is not defiled by what he eats, even when his hands are not properly washed. The second half, however, remained enigmatic, for it stands without an immediate context. The principle that uncleanness comes from within and not from without is grounded in the biblical teaching concerning the heart as the source of all spiritual and moral conduct, but this was not apparent to the crowd or to the disciples. The implications of Jesus' teaching that nothing external to men defiles were to have far-reaching consequences for the Church, which Mark spells out in the light of further revelation in verse 19b. Here, however, Jesus' expression is general and enigmatic. It did not abrogate the Mosaic laws on purification or erase the distinctions between clean and unclean and declare them invalid. It rather attacked the delusion that sinful men can attain to true purity before God through the scrupulous observance of cultic purity which is powerless to cleanse the defilement of the heart. It is this latter emphasis which is stressed in the exposition to the disciples in verses 17–19a." NICNT

clean.)²⁰ And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. ²¹ For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

- And he called the people to him again – After the sidebar debate with the Pharisees, Jesus returns to His main group that He was instructing and comments on what just went down.
- and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: - Jesus gets everyone's attention and says, 'Hey listen up, y'all. I'm going to explain something super important that you may not be getting the clear story on. Let me clarify.'
- There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, - No item from the outside can make a person defiled in the eyes of God. It's not the thing that you interact with that can make you unclean truly.
 - Conflict, Contradiction, or Complex? – how does this jive with rules that Jesus, Peter and Paul gave people about following kosher laws in some settings, or about not drinking too much, or needing to watch our intakes? The answer is 'depends on what you mean by that.' Let's use weed as an example. It's not the plant that is going to make you disconnected from God. It's your heart to make the choice to ingest it for selfish reasons and disconnect. If someone has cancer and uses weed to settle their stomach, God isn't mad at them. Their intent is pure. It's not the thing that makes someone sin, it's their heart that interacts with the thing that makes them sin.
- but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." – It's the things of the heart that truly make us sinful. Our external, our circumstances don't make us sin because we have the choice on how we are going to interact with those things. If you were raised as a little boy in a brothel by your mom who was a prostitute and saw all manners of inappropriate things, God isn't blaming you for that. It wasn't the atmosphere of sin that can ruin us, it's how we internalize it and make it part of us that gets us. Our sin is a matter of the heart, not a matter of circumstance.
- And when he had entered the house and left the people, - Jesus had finished his public address and ministry for the day and was heading back in with His crew.
- Matthew addition – "*And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."* – Matthew adds that there was another initial conversation that the disciples wanted to get into once they were away

from the Pharisees and the crowds. His disciples wanted to point out how much Jesus had offended and ticked off the Pharisees by exposing and rebuking them publicly like that. Jesus' response was brilliant. He said, if they aren't going to learn from My words, then I guess the Holy Spirit hasn't opened their hearts, which means they aren't going to be on our team today anyway. If that is the case, then they are only going to blind guides leading other people astray and we need to warn others not to follow them publicly.

- his disciples asked him about the parable. – Matthew tells us that this was Peter that asked the question. He wanted to hear the explanation of what it meant directly.
- And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? – Jesus rebuked/corrected Peter and the team for asking about what it all meant since He was wanting them to catch on by now. They had heard so much teaching from Him and perhaps He was frustrated that they weren't taking it seriously enough or paying close enough attention.
- Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" – Jesus realizes that some spiritual truths are deep and take some pondering, but on the other hand, there are some things that should be practically and logically obvious. This is one of those situations. The whole principle of what makes us sin should be obvious when it comes to food issues. Food is a neutral. The heart is not. How we interact with something makes it sinful or not. It's not about a physical item going into our stomach and being pooped out that makes us sinful, it's how we interact with that item and what it means to us and does to us. Let's use drugs as an example once again. If someone gets loaded on heroin and checks out from God for a couple hours, it's a selfish move and God holds them accountable for it. But, if someone goes in for surgery and the anesthesiologist loads them up with chemical drugs and knocks them out for a couple hours, they are fine. Same reactions by our bodies physically but different intent.
- Thus he declared all foods clean – This is a commentary, seemingly by Mark (although I'm sure people argue that it would be a copyist addition to clarify the impact of those words, later), to explain an implication of what Jesus just said. He just said that ingesting food, clean or unclean, can't make you sinful. Therefore, a new era for the Jewish people, through the New Covenant of Jesus, had begun. Kosher laws no longer dictated ritual or spiritual health. All food could be legit depending on how people interacted with it.
- And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. – The things of the heart are what makes us sinful and unclean to the world. What is spewing out of our mouths?
- For from within, out of the heart of man, - Our mouth and our actions only do and say what our heart allows. This means that anything that is

coming from us, has been approved by our internal core. If those things are wicked that come out, then the root has a problem.

- come evil thoughts, - the basis for all evil acts. This is a very general statement about what we believe deep down.
- sexual immorality,¹⁰ - this is also a very general statement about things that are sexual that are wrong or sinful without any real specific charge.
- theft, - theft is clear: Taking something for personal gain that is not yours.
- murder, - This is not simply the act of killing someone (e.g. war, police action, etc.) but doing so for a personal reason unauthorized by God.
- adultery, - this is sex with at least one person of the couple that is in a marriage covenant to someone else.
- coveting, - this is desiring what other people have in a way that wants to consume it and take it from someone else. The result would be selfish gain for you and significant loss for the other party.
- wickedness,¹¹ - this is a general term for sinful things we do on purpose.
- deceit,¹² - this is sin that we do to trick someone else for our gain. It's about 'cunning and treachery'.
- sensuality,¹³ - this is kind of a misleading translation. This word means more sexual excess or debauchery (absence of restraint).
- envy,¹⁴ - envy is like coveting. It's jealousy of someone else but not wanting them to have it or be blessed by it. It's not just liking or being attracted to something that someone else has. That's normal.
- slander,¹⁵ - this is bending the general opinion about someone through deception. It could be lying about someone or telling a certain truth about someone in order to degrade their reputation. When this is done toward God it's called blasphemy.
- pride, - pride is believing that you are inherently more valuable than another person and that you are therefore better and greater.
- foolishness¹⁶ – I love this definition by William Lane, *"the dominant disposition of the man who is morally and spiritually insensitive; he does not know God and he does not wish to know him."*

¹⁰ "Fornication is a broad term covering all acts of sexual immorality; it is wider than adultery, which presupposes the breach of the marriage bond, and "licentiousness," which carries the nuance of open immorality." NICNT

¹¹ ""Wickedness" appears to be a general term denoting acts of deliberate malice." NICNT

¹² ""Deceit" implies the components of cunning and treachery." NICNT

¹³ **766. ἀσελγεία *aselgeia***; gen. *aselgeias*, fem. noun, from *aselgēs* (n.f.), licentious, brutal.

Lasciviousness, license, debauchery, sexual excess, absence of restraint, insatiable desire for pleasure.

Mark 7:22, arrogance, insolence referring to words; 2 Cor. 12:21, wantonness, lustfulness, excessive pleasure (also Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19; 2 Pet. 2:7, 18); Eph. 4:19, debauchery, perversion in general; 1 Pet. 4:3; 2 Pet. 2:7; Jude 1:4." Complete Word Study of the NT

¹⁴ ""An evil eye" is a Semitic expression for stinginess (Deut. 15:9; Eccles. 14:10; 31:13) or for that grudging jealousy with which a man looks upon the possessions of another." NICNT

¹⁵ ""Railing" can refer to "slander" (as in the RSV) directed toward a man, but in the OT it always describes an affront to the majesty of God, and a more accurate translation would be "blasphemy." NICNT

¹⁶ ""Foolishness" describes the dominant disposition of the man who is morally and spiritually insensitive; he does not know God and he does not wish to know him." NICNT

- All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person – it's these terrible wicked things in a person's heart that makes them bad, not the food they eat.

Conclusion

- A Necessary Question – every Christian must continually ask themselves, 'what does my religious culture believe and teach that is not actually in alignment with the words of Jesus?' All of us are taught in religious communities, and that's a good thing. But sometimes the communities that we connect with believe a version of a truth that may not be in agreement with what Jesus teaches. It's those areas where we must politely and respectfully disagree and not internalize.
- A Necessary Posture – as we leave I want to remind all of us that the proper posture when engaging with the Word of God is one of a student and not a competing master of opinions. We learn from Jesus, we don't teach Jesus.