

THE HEART IS WICKED

--MARK 7:14-23--

INTRODUCTION:

The Pharisees and scribes wanted to discredit Jesus but ultimately, they wanted to eliminate Him. They thought they had Jesus trapped when they saw some of His disciples eating with unwashed hands. They asked why His disciples did not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but ate bread with impure hands? Jesus accused them of elevating the traditions of the elders over the commands of God. He showed that their legalism made them hypocrites.

Leaving this delegation that had come to discredit Him standing completely humiliated and wanting to do away with Jesus right then and there, Jesus called the crowd that had gathered around Him. He was about to tell them what truly makes one defiled and what He was about to tell them was revolutionary.

I. THE TRUTH OF DEFILEMENT STATED (Mark 7:14-16)

- a. Jesus' ministry in Galilee was drawing to a close, but even at the end the _____ seemed to grow whenever He was present.
- b. Jesus then began to speak to them about spiritual _____.
- c. The _____ is not the only place where wickedness manifests itself, but it is the most ready, immediate and constant exit for the evil inside us. (Proverbs 6:12; 15:28; Jeremiah 17:9)
- d. As I said in my introduction, Jesus' words were _____. (1st Samuel 16:7; 1st Chronicles 28:9)
- e. It is true that God's law written down by Moses did have some rituals and _____ that had been given to the people of Israel by God.
- f. The book of Hebrews speaks of the Law being only a shadow, or an _____ to point us to the Lord Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 10:1-4, 10)
- g. The Old Testament was clear that no attention to commanded ceremony or ritual was pleasing to God unless it came from a heart that sincerely _____ Him. (Matthew 23:27-28)
- h. Verse 16 of our passage adds the phrase, "*If anyone has ears to _____, let him hear.*" (Mark 7:16, NASB95)

II. THE TRUTH OF DEFILEMENT EXPLAINED (Mark 7:17-23)

- a. Jesus at some point during the day left the crowd and entered the _____ where He was staying.
- b. Jesus recognized their struggle, and He again took the time to _____ more fully what He had been saying to the crowd.
- c. Mark then gives us a parenthetical note explaining that Jesus in making this statement made obsolete the dietary laws of Judaism and declared all _____ clean. (Acts 10)
- d. Beginning in verse 20, Jesus switched from the physical illustration to speak clearly about the _____ reality.
- e. Jesus began by listing six representative evil _____.
- f. Jesus then listed the evil _____ that lie behind the evil actions.
- g. What a dark, _____ list, and these words came from Jesus' lips. (John 3:3; Titus 3:5-7; Ezekiel 36:26)

CONCLUSION:

The Pharisees and the scribes failed to understand that their corruption was on the inside. Though they appeared extremely religious, their superficial, legalistic, self-righteousness was infinitely inadequate. Like all sinners, they needed new hearts that were regenerated by the Spirit of God. Yet, when Jesus confronted their hypocrisy, they rejected Him in angry unbelief, plotted His murder, and committed spiritual suicide. Those who harden their hearts to the good news of the gospel, like the Pharisees and scribes did, will face eternal judgment.

But those whose hearts have been made new by the power of God have become new creations in Christ. Have been baptized with Jesus Christ in His death and raised with Him in His resurrection. (Romans 6:3-4) The good news of the gospel is completely and utterly radical: a new birth, a new heart, a new creation, a resurrection! Apart from Christ the world is desperately lost. It can only be redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ. There is no other way. We can polish the outside, we can educate ourselves, we can do "good" things. But none of these will really change us. We need Christ's life, death, and resurrection to transform us from the inside out.