

# KINGDOM

the gospel of mark

## Week 7 | Kingdom: The Gospel of Mark | February 15, 2015

### Opening Up:

- What activities make you feel the most anxious? (i.e. When I am doing..., I feel awful.)
- What activities make you feel the most joy? (i.e. When I am doing..., I feel amazing.)

### Read (or reference): Mark 7:1-23

The Mosaic law listed a number of physical conditions that disqualified someone from worship: contact with a dead body (Numbers 19:11-22); infectious skin diseases such as boils or sores or rashes (Leviticus 13:1-46); mildew in clothing, article, or home (Leviticus 13:47-14:57); any bodily discharges, either natural (as semen, menstruation, fluids from childbirth) or unnatural (diarrhea, yeast, hemorrhages of blood or puss) (see Leviticus 12 and 15); and eating any food in the lists of those items called unclean (Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14).

If a person became defiled through any of these things (or through contact with someone who was defiled), he or she could not come into the sanctuary of God for a period, and then had to wash with water for purification (Leviticus 15:8-10). The Bible only required washings of the priests at the temple (Exodus 30:19 and 40:13), not of all people. But the elders developed a "fence" (called "Halakah") of more specific and stricter rules than those of the Bible. They demanded that everyone wash their hands in order to be pure. Jesus, however, refused to have his disciples bound by such traditions.

### Discuss:

1. In The Old Testament "clean laws," dirt symbolized sin. Why is this a good metaphor? In what ways does sin do to the soul what filth does to the body?
2. Look at verses 1-5. The religious leaders drew up specific moral guidelines for their faith community that went beyond those laid down in the Scripture. What are the advantages and disadvantages of doing this? In retrospect, is this a good idea or a bad one, and why? What are some ways Christians "add" to the law today?
3. In verses 6-13 Jesus illustrates how designating something as a "gift to God," which is a good thing, had become a loophole in the tradition that denied the actual words of God. How do good traditions in the church sometimes harm the good work of the church and sometimes even deny God's word?
4. In verses 6-7 Jesus quotes from the Old Testament showing that the Pharisees were hypocrites and their hearts were far from him. How do people hypocritically worship Jesus with distant hearts?
5. Jesus teaches us in 14-23 that real uncleanliness is not an outside-in issue. Uncleanliness is an inside-out problem. What are some outside-in solutions that people attempt to solve their inside-out problems with? (i.e. What do we count on in our lives to prove that we are acceptable, that is, clean?)
6. Tim Keller says, "To be human is to feel inconsequential. Every one of us has at some time or other felt this kind of inexplicable sense of inconsequentiality, that we're unclean, that we need to prove ourselves." How is this true?
7. It is possible for Jesus to declare "all foods clean" because he is the fulfillment of cleanliness laws. Jesus makes the unclean, clean. How does being declared clean effect our work, friendships, and family?
8. Pray.