

02-16-20

Mark 7:1-23

1 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 2 they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4 and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" 6 He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' 8 You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

9 Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' 11 But you say that if anyone tells father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban' (that is, an offering to God) -- 12 then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this."

14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15 there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile." 16 17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, 19 since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 20 And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles. 21 For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22 adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

This passage describes a controversy between Jesus and some pharisees around issues of purity and impurity—who was pure or impure and what made them so and what were the consequences. We are prone to think that purity concerns were a uniquely Jewish problem, but this would be entirely wrong. The desire to be pure and the disgust at things and people seen as

impure is a thoroughly human concern, as the questions below should illustrate. The tendency for one group of people to consider another group disgusting, evil and abhorrent is quite modern; and it is something Jesus has an opinion about.

Disgust: a strong distaste; nausea; loathing. Repugnance caused by something offensive; a strong aversion. See also: dislike, revolting, insulting, abhorrent, defiled, dirty.

1. Name some things that disgust you.
2. Why do you find these things offensive or abhorrent?
3. Should you find these things revolting?
4. Are there people or groups of people you find disgusting or revolting?
5. Why do you find them disgusting?
6. Should you find them abhorrent?
7. *What* did Jesus find disgusting and why?
8. *Who* did Jesus find disgusting and why?
9. Laws about kosher eating and purity are found in the Law of Moses. Laws about right living—Do not kill, do not steal, etc, are also found in the Law of Moses. Jesus disregards one set of laws aside but reinforces the other. How can he do this and why does he do this? When is the law not the law?
10. v. 18—“...whatever goes into a person from outside *cannot* defile...” Do you believe this? Why or why not?
11. Can you think of a Christian practice (past or present) that may not be commanded in Scripture but is nevertheless a strongly held tradition within the church (or some churches)?
12. How should Christians relate to people who refuse to do things “our way”? How do we know where to draw the line between things that might be disgusting but could be accepted and things that are certainly disgusting and should be rejected?
13. v. 19 for extra credit: Did Jesus really declare all foods clean? Or does Mark declare that Jesus declared all foods clean?
14. *That’s way more than enough questions for one week. Someone stop me before I fill another page...*