

It All Points to Jesus

Mark 7:1-23

Ice Breaker: Describe an unwritten rule in your family (not necessarily mandated by Scripture) that is very important for you to follow. Why is it so important? What happens if someone in your family doesn't keep this unwritten rule?

Big Idea: The Kingdom of Heaven was breaking loose all over the place – and all the Pharisees could see was that Jesus wasn't teaching his disciples to ceremonially wash their hands. But Jesus taught that no amount of "religious hand washing" can cleanse us from sin. Jesus came to bring about the kind of spiritual cleansing from sin that no ceremonial hand-washing could do.

Digging Deeper:

- 1) Read Mark 7:1-5. Why do the Pharisees send a delegation out from Jerusalem to confront Jesus? Does this strike you as odd – given the demonstration of Kingdom power that Jesus has been displaying during the first six chapters of Mark? Why or why not?
- 2) Read Mark 7:6-13. How does Jesus use Scripture to put the Pharisees' traditions in their proper place? Speculate about how the Pharisees' traditions became more important to them than God's commands? Where do you see this kind of thing happening in the church today? What should followers of Jesus respond when this happens in the church?
- 3) Read Mark 7:14-23. What does Jesus say is not the source of our un-cleanness? What does Jesus say is the source of our un-cleanness? When you take inventory of your life, and you look at the list of 13 things that Jesus says come out of our hearts (v21-22) – what does this say about the spiritual status of our hearts (apart from the work of Jesus)?
- 4) Pastor Joshua cited Mark 10:45 – which says that Jesus came to give his life as a ransom for many. In other words, a "religious hand washing" isn't enough to cleanse us from sin. Only the blood of Jesus can make our hearts spiritually clean. How does that truth bring focus to the message that we should be proclaiming to our sin-stained world?
- 5) Do you think there are people in our church who have bought into the lie that if they're good enough or religious enough or go to church enough or clean themselves up enough – that God will accept them? Why? Are you tempted to buy into this lie? Why?
- 6) Spend time praying that we (as individuals and as a church family) would not agree with this lie that we can "clean ourselves up" – but instead, we would simply put our trust in the finished work of Jesus and what He's already done for us.