

Discussion Notes
Mark 7.1-11 – Inner Purity
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Leanne McAlister

Jesus is once again faced with challenges from the religious elite in Israel. His passionate response reminds us that he's come to transform our way of life, not enforce behavior modification.

Mark 7.1-4

- The scribes and Pharisees confront Jesus regarding what his disciples have been doing, or rather, not doing.
- Oral scholarship has developed many years in this highly religious culture and has given way to extravagant tradition. Interpretation upon interpretation on the Torah.
- The purification rituals have been extended and elaborated on and have become heavy and burdensome practices.
- Jesus disciples aren't washing like the religious elite thinks they should.
- Traditions aren't inherently bad but when they turn to legalism we're in tricky waters.
- It is dangerous when our preferences become legislative, dogmatic, and oppressive.

Mark 7.6-8

- Jesus has a problem with hypocrisy. He sees their hearts and how they're trying to project an image of someone they are not.
- A hypocrite is an actor.
- Jesus longs for people's hearts (the integral), but they are overly concerned with the external. This turns into legalism, and at the heart of legalism is pride.
- Do we hate legalism, or do we love it? Living in legalism means we don't have to change, or give Jesus our heart.
- Legalism, however, doesn't deal with our problem, which is sin. If sin is not dealt with it leads us to death. Jesus wants to give us life.
- This is why Paul is so opposed to the legalism the Galatian Christians are tempted to embrace.
- What would happen if we all stopped trying to do the right thing and really just sought the face of God?

9-17

- Jesus says that nothing should be added or subtracted from the Law.
- We must not care more about custom or tradition than honoring God as he has instructed us.
- Jesus calls them out and challenges their systems.

What does this text tell us?

- We have a problem, and we can't avoid it. No amount of hand washing or good deeds will make us truly "clean" or alive. Only Jesus does this.
- We often try to solve the problem by dealing with surface issues through behavior modification rather than letting God in to do heart surgery.
- Jesus is the answer to the problem. Our openness to him will mean healing, transformation, and growth. It is not easy, but it is the only way to knowing real life God intends for us.

Ezekiel 36 – God, give us tender hearts, and help us to trust you as you do your work.

Discussion Questions:

- Leanne said that we might not hate legalism, but actually love it. Why might we love it?
- Why is it hard to let Jesus do work on our hearts, dealing with the interior rather than the exterior.
- Share a story (if you have one) of when you experienced some deep transformation.
- How do we (practically) let Jesus work on our interior? What does that look like?