

Sunday Sermon Questions • 11/3/2024

Mark 7:1-23

Why do you think the Pharisees and religious leaders were so focused on outward rituals and traditions? In what ways might modern-day believers be prone to prioritizing external behaviors over inner transformation?

In verses 6-7, Jesus criticizes the religious leaders for honoring God with their lips while their hearts are far from Him. How can we ensure that our relationship with God is heartfelt and sincere rather than merely external?

Jesus highlights the concept of "Corban" as an example of how traditions can undermine God's commands. Can you think of something that would serve as a modern day "Corban"? Or are there areas in our lives where cultural or personal traditions might distract us from living out God's Word? How can we address this?

In verses 15-23, Jesus teaches that what defiles a person comes from within. How does this shift our understanding of purity and sin? What practices can we adopt to continually examine our hearts?

Reflecting on the sermon's call to follow Jesus rather than simply claiming Christianity, what steps can we take this week to deepen our commitment to genuinely follow Him?

Jesus calls out the Pharisees for valuing human traditions over God's commands (verse 8). What are some "human traditions" in today's Christian culture that might unintentionally overshadow the core message of the Gospel?

In what ways does Jesus' teaching challenge our understanding of "clean" and "unclean"? How might this perspective help us approach others with compassion, rather than judgment?

Jesus teaches that inner thoughts and attitudes—like envy, slander, and arrogance—are what truly defile a person (verses 21-23). How can we become more aware of these inner attitudes and seek transformation?

In the closing of the sermon, Pastor Brent challenges us to "craft a rule of life", not out of Duty, but rather out of a genuine **desire** to connect with Jesus. What would crafting a "rule of life" look like for you, and how could it help you grow in faith?

Rule of Life Questions

The Pharisees prioritized rituals over genuine connection with God. How might creating a personal "rule of life" help us prioritize practices like sabbath, solitude, and simplicity over merely "going through the motions" in our faith?

Jesus emphasized that transformation must come from the inside out. Which of the nine practices from **Practicing the Way** (Sabbath, Solitude, Prayer, Community, Scripture, Fasting, Generosity, Service, and Witness) do you need to begin practicing or mature in, in an effort to cultivate an inner heart of devotion to God?

In Mark 7, Jesus calls out the Pharisees for their misplaced priorities. How might the disciplines of community and generosity challenge us to focus less on ourselves and more on the needs of others in a God-centered way?

Jesus speaks of the importance of what comes from the heart. Which disciplines from **Practicing the Way** do you find most helpful for realigning your heart and mind with God's values? How could incorporating these into a rule of life help you stay grounded?

Reflect on the Pharisees' emphasis on external "cleanliness" and Jesus' call to focus on the heart. How could disciplines like fasting, silence & solitude, and reading scripture help you focus on inner transformation instead of external appearances?