

## Introduction to Mark 7:14-30

Sunday, June 12, 2016  
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Most people today believe that their greatest problem in life is something that has happened to them, something that has come from outside of them. They also believe that the solution to their problem is to be found within themselves. The gospel, on the other hand, presents us with the fact that our greatest problem is our sin that proceeds from within us, and the solution we need is Christ's righteousness.

In these passages, Jesus not only flips cultural understanding of what is clean and unclean, but what it means to be a citizen of His kingdom, and also who is eligible to be...

### Context

Thus far in Mark's Gospel, Jesus has been preaching to and healing mostly people in Israel. Unfortunately, the leaders of Israel, and even Jesus' own chosen disciples, do not understand who He is. Up to this point, only the demons (1:24; 5:7), and nature itself (4:39) recognize Jesus' authority. Here another person unwaveringly recognizes His authority, but still not one of His own (John 1:11).

### Structure

- I. Jesus Explains True Religion Versus Mere Form of It (14-23)
- II. Woman Demonstrates True Religion by Coming to Jesus (24-30)

**Reflect** (Use this section to write down any insights you received from the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon as well.)

How can I be clean?

7:14-23

- Principle      *not what you eat*
- Confusion     *disciples don't get it*
- Application   *God's word is practical*

It's a matter of the heart!

7:24-30

- Principle      *not where you're from*
- Resistance    *Jesus appears unfriendly*
- Faith          *woman won't give up*

It's a matter of faith!

## Discuss

1. The Pharisees attempted to add rituals like hand-washing to what it means to be saved. What are things that we might try to add to the gospel? Or what things might we insist someone do to become a Christian that Jesus wouldn't insist on?

2. Jesus' answer to the Syro-Phoenician woman may be a bit unsettling to our ears. How does Jesus go about loving this woman even in what appears to be a demeaning statement?

3. Pastor Don quoted Robert Murray M'Cheyne saying, "the seed of every known sin is in my heart." What do you think of that statement? Does that describe you/the people in your life? How have you seen it played out?

4. Holiness is not about behavior; it is a change of heart. In what ways have you sensed God change your heart in the past weeks and months to love Him more?

5. In rebuking the Pharisees and casting out the demon from the Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter, Jesus demonstrates His supremacy over man-made religion and the spiritual realm. How can this be a comfort to us? How can this draw us into deeper admiration of and fellowship with Jesus?

**Go Deeper** *(This section is especially for leaders to consider as they prepare for the Growth Group meeting)*

**Gospel Connections:** The gospel is primarily about how we sinners (unclean) can be reconciled (made clean) to a holy God. It is also very much about how we sinners can be reconciled to one another. In this passage, Jesus powerfully demonstrates how God shows no partiality. Jews who wanted only the outward form of religion, without their hearts allied to God, demonstrate unbelief, while a woman who was born to a people God had not previously chosen demonstrates what true faith is all about. The Syro-Phoenician woman's daughter was made clean when Jesus' cast the demon out of her by faith. We, too, are made clean before God and reconciled to our fellow human beings when Jesus cleanses us by faith in the power of His blood (1 John 1:7).

**Whole Bible Connections:** Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14 prescribe lists of what was acceptable and, more importantly, what was unacceptable for the people of Israel to eat. In each case, the reason given for the dietary restrictions is that the people were to be holy because the LORD their God, who brought them out of Egypt, is holy (Lev. 11:44-45; Deut. 14:21). The context of Deuteronomy is creating safe-guards against the idolatry of the pagan nations surrounding Israel. Presumably, then, the dietary restrictions were put in place to keep the hearts of the people of Israel from straying after the pagan gods. Jesus puts the law in its proper context, then, by stating that all foods are clean. It is only what comes out of a person that makes them unclean. Under the New Covenant, people are made clean by faith in Jesus, which leads to holy living, not the other way around.

**Theological Connections:** Jesus' correction, that what proceeds from within is what defiles a person, is a damning one. Jeremiah reminds us that the heart is deceitful and wicked above all things (Jer. 17:9-10). No one can claim inherent "cleanness" before God. Mankind is not basically good, as many believe, but sinful (Rom. 3:23). However, God is gracious and merciful. In sending Jesus, in whom there was no deceit, God provided a means for all who believe to be made clean in His sight.