

Home Group Notes 7

Mark 7:1-23 Religion of the heart

Introduction

Is it not rather easy for religious people to focus on little manageable rules that seem a bit religious, and ignore the heart of the Bible's teaching?

1. Read vv.1-4

Is it a good thing to wash your hands before eating?

2. Why? [] less likely to pick up bad germs
[] it is necessary to prove you are religious
[] unless you do, you are considered defiled

3. It seems the Pharisees had lots of 'traditions of the elders', which were extra rules, above and beyond what was required by God's word. And it seems like these extras were assuming a greater importance in people's lives than the Bible's call.

Read vv.5-13 Here Jesus accuses them of hypocrisy. What does Jesus mean by this (6-8)?

4. Jesus' example illustrates the point (10-12)
Which of God's commands are being set aside?
How is this done in a religious-sounding way?
5. Why is Jesus strong in his denunciation of these religious people and their approach?
Can you think of aspects of God's word where Jesus might accuse religious people like us of hypocrisy?
6. Do you find you focus on easier man-made customs instead of the big challenges of God's word?

7. Read vv.14-19

Who did Jesus want to understand these things?
What did he want them to understand?
How well did his disciples understand?

8. The first application is explained by Mark in v.19.
Do Christians have food laws like Jews & Muslims?
Should the eating of any foods be called sinful?
Is smoking a sin?

9. How inclined are you to say that your sin is something which comes from things around you rather than the attitudes within you?

10. Why do people sin? Where does it come from?
[] because of our unfortunate circumstances?
[] because of what is in our heart?
[] because of the people we mix with?

11. **Read vv.20-23** Look at the list of inner attitudes which so often lead to sin. Do you agree with Jesus that these are the sorts of things which make us unclean or defiled in relation to God?

12. Are there things which you would take off the list? Why do you think Jesus includes them?

13. Does the list make you glad that Jesus offers free and full forgiveness and salvation by his death and resurrection?

Prayer Points

Pray for Lesley as she is ordained and begins her ministry as a presbyter/priest

Pray that we will accept Jesus' teaching on sin and where it comes from

Pray for those amongst us facing serious illness and major decisions