**Our Own Heart is Deceitful**

**By Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Mark 7:13-23**

**Wednesday Evening**

**February 6, 2019**

**13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do."**

Saints, the Corban vow effectively put tradition above God’s word. To be able to exempt oneself from one of God’s commandments by taking a human vow meant that the Pharisees had attempted to break the law of God.

Jesus added that the Pharisees did many, many things like that. This was only one example of the premeditated selfishness of these religious leaders who set themselves above all the people and, in effect, destroyed the laws that they took so much pride in keeping.

**Galatians 1:11-16**

11 But I make known to you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached by me is not according to man. 12 For I neither received it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through the revelation of Jesus Christ. 13 For you have heard of my former conduct in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God beyond measure and tried to destroy it.

14 And I advanced in Judaism beyond many of my contemporaries in my own nation, being more exceedingly zealous for the traditions of my fathers. 15 But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace, 16 to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the Gentiles…

Saints, Jesus clarified to these hypocritical religious leaders that God’s law, not oral tradition, should be the true authority over people’s lives.

**Matthew 22:37-40**

37 Jesus said to him, " 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

**James 4:6**

But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."

**Proverbs 3:33-35**

33 The curse of the LORD is on the house of the wicked, But He blesses the home of the just. 34 Surely He scorns the scornful, But gives grace to the humble. 35 The wise shall inherit glory, But shame shall be the legacy of fools.

**14 When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: 15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.**

Saints, Jesus addressed the crowd and the disciples regarding the true nature of “defilement.” The people had listened to Jesus’ stinging accusation of the religious leaders; here Jesus called the crowd to listen . . . and try to understand, for he would make his final point and have the final say in this debate. The pharisees forgot what King David wrote in the Psalms.

**Psalm 51:5-9**

5 Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me. 6 Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. 7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. 8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. 9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

The Pharisees thought that to eat with defiled hands meant to be defiled. Jesus explained that the Pharisees were wrong in thinking they were acceptable to God just because they were “clean” on the outside. He explained that defilement is not an external matter (keeping food laws, washing ceremonially, keeping Sabbath requirements), but an internal one.

**16 If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!" 17 When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18 So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19 because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?"**

Saints, in private, the disciples asked him what he meant.

Jesus explained that what goes into a person cannot defile that person. Thus, to eat food with hands that may have touched a “defiled” person or article did not mean that a person was ingesting defilement. Logically, as Jesus explained, food goes in the mouth, passes through the stomach, and then goes out. It has no effect whatever on the moral condition of the heart. Sin in a person’s heart is what defiles.

**Mark 7:14-15**

**14 When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: 15 There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.**

Saints, the Roman Christians, the primary audience of Mark’s Gospel, may have been confused about the Jewish food laws and whether they had to follow them. These words, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable, clarified this issue for them (although it took the early church several years to fully understand; see Acts 10 and 15).

**Acts 10:9-16**

9 The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. 10 Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance

11 and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. 12 In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air.

13 And a voice came to him, "Rise, Peter; kill and eat." 14 But Peter said, "Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean." 15 And a voice spoke to him again the second time, "What God has cleansed you must not call common." 16 This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again.

Saints, the bottom line: People are not pure because of adherence to ceremonial laws and rituals. We become pure on the inside as Christ renews our minds and transforms us into his image.

**20 And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within and defile a man."**

Saints, defilement occurs because of sin. Sin begins in a person’s heart—in the thought life—and what is in the heart comes out in words and actions.

**Jeremiah 17:9-10**

9 "The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it? 10 I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give every man according to his ways, According to the fruit of his doings.

**Romans 6:23**

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Saints, in Romans, Paul explained how this happens. Unless the Holy Spirit controls our sinful human nature, outbursts of the flesh will be prevalent. Evil thoughts begin within, in a person’s heart.

**Romans 8:1-11**

1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death.

3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, 4 that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. 6 For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. 7 Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.

8 So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. 9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. 10 And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. 11 But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

Saints, while most people work hard to keep their outward appearance attractive, what is in their hearts is even more important. When people become Christians, God makes them different on the inside.

Jesus listed a catalog of twelve “evil thoughts” that begin in the heart. Six are evil individual actions; six are evil attitudes or principles. Notice that the evil attitudes, whether acted upon or not, are still considered sin.

**1. Sexual immorality**

Various kinds of extramarital sexual activity

**2. Theft**

Taking something that belongs to another

**3. Murder**

Taking the God-given life of another person

**4. Adultery**

A married person having sex with someone other than his or her spouse

**5. Greed**

Relentless urge to get more for oneself

**6. Wickedness**

Doing evil despite the good that has been received (malice)

**7. Deceit**

To trick or mislead by lying

**8. Eagerness for lustful pleasure**

Immoral behavior that is neither restrained nor concealed

**9. Envy**

Desire for something possessed by another

**10. Slander**

To destroy another’s good reputation

**11. Pride**

Making claims of superior intelligence or importance

**12. Foolishness**

Inability to discern between immorality and morality

All these vile things begin in a person’s heart. It is those evil actions and attitudes that cause defilement. Many of the words Jesus used could have described the Pharisees.

**Let's Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace." '**