
Date: May 28, 2023 **Message:** The Heart of the Matter

Series: Gospel of Mark **Scripture:** Mark 7:1-23

What the Pharisees actually got right:

What the Pharisees (and we) get wrong:

A startling declaration:

Questions for Reflection and Discussion

Mark 7:1-23

1. In what ways can spiritual traditions be good or beneficial? In what ways might they become harmful?
2. Which rituals or traditions or spiritual disciplines at church or in your relationship with God are possible to do as merely external acts (i.e., just going through the motions) without necessitating an internal spiritual reality?
3. Can you think of any common spiritual rituals or traditions at church or in your relationship with God that have no basis in Scripture? Does that mean that those are necessarily evil practices? Why or why not?
4. How did the Pharisees create a loophole when it came to their practice of "Corban" (vv. 10-13)? What are some other examples of spiritual "loopholes" that we might create today to enable us to manipulate the Word of God to our own advantage or to avoid obeying God?
5. Given that Jesus explicitly rebuked the Pharisees for making their man-made traditions equal in authority to Scripture and for focusing more on external actions than on the heart, why do you think these things are still such common practices today, even among Christians?
6. What does Jesus say in this passage is the real source of spiritual uncleanness? What in this passage points us to the solution to our problem of spiritual uncleanness?
7. What does it mean that Jesus "declared all foods clean" (v. 19)? What does it *not* mean? Why does this matter for us?