The True Source of Spiritual Defilement
Mark 7:14-23

I. As we begin our lesson this morning I would like for you to consider a list that pertains to various activities believed by some to be connected to spiritual purity.
   1. Rosary beads
   2. Burning of incense
   3. Lighting of candles
   4. Wearing of veils and other religious clothing

II. What do all of these have in common? Ultimately they are the traditions of men and in no way connected to spiritual purity.

III. What I mean by spiritual purity is the idea of being spiritually right in the sight of God.

IV. In our last lesson in Mark Jesus was confronted by some Pharisee’s who believed His disciples were spiritually defiled because they had eaten their food without first washing their hands.
   1. The Pharisees believed one could not be spiritually pure without following the traditions of the elders.
   2. They believed to eat with unclean hands would cause you to become spiritually defiled,
   3. Mark 7:5

V. What Jesus is dealing with in these passages is similar to the list I asked you to consider earlier.

VI. Many believe that by holding to their religious traditions they are spiritually pure. The problem with this way of thinking is that these man made acts are of no true benefit over spiritual defilement.

VII. An even greater problem is found when the heart of the one holding to these man made traditions is examined. Many will hold to their religious traditions thinking they will make them spiritually pure, yet all the while their heart is far from God. This was the case with the religious leaders of Jesus’ time, Mark 7:6-8.

VIII. In our lesson today, we are going to find that the truth of the matter is **True spiritual defilement is a condition of the heart and is a result of neglecting God’s commands.**

Trans: Let’s begin by considering

1. That Which Does Not Defile
   A. Mark 7:14-19
      B. As we have seen from Mark 7:7, the Pharisees had taught their traditions as if they were the laws of God.
      C. Here, Jesus is guiding the people away from the false teachings of the Pharisee’s and they need to pay attention and understand what He is about to say, Mark 7:14 (x2)
      D. He begins by telling them that nothing outside the man which going into him can defile him, v.15
         1. Specifically Jesus is speaking about eating food with unwashed hands, Matt. 15:11, 20
         2. Jesus makes it clear that what his disciples had done did not defile them.
         3. He also makes it clear that the teaching of the elders was wrong.
E. As in the past we see that His disciples do not understand what He is telling them, v.18
   1. **Matt. 15:15**
      2. It’s possible their minds were on the physical.
         a. That which comes out defiles?
         b. Was Jesus speaking of something physical coming out of the mouth?

F. Jesus explains what he is talking about, Mark 7:19
   1. He does this by explaining why what goes into the mouth cannot defile.
   2. Jesus provides two reasons.
      a. **It does not go into the heart**
      b. **It goes into the stomach and is eliminated.**

G. All food taken in serves its purpose of providing nutrition to the body and that which is unneeded is eliminated.
   1. Jesus is saying that food cannot defile because it is only food.
   2. Under the Old Covenant there were unclean foods, Lev. 11:1ff
   3. But eating or coming in contact with unclean foods was not the cause of defilement.
   4. There is nothing intrinsically sinful about these foods,
      a. Gen. 1:20-25
      b. **1Tim. 4:4,5**
   5. Defilement from foods came from disobeying the command to not partake of or come in contact with these, even if it was accidental.
   6. Although there were health issues with these food items, the bottom line is God provided a way for the people to show themselves consecrated to Him by abstaining from these foods, Lev. 11:44-45.
   7. By following Gods command to abstain from these foods and adhering to the purification's laws if they came in contact with them, the people demonstrated that God was their Sovereign God. Thus they showed themselves to be consecrated to God.

**Appl:** So what the scribes and Pharisees were accusing Jesus’ disciples of was unfounded. They in fact were defiled because they were setting aside the commands of God for their own traditions.

Man is not defiled because he eats food without first washing his hands. Why? Because what goes into man cannot defile. Man is defiled because he follows his own path and lives contrary to the will of God.

**Trans:** With that said Jesus now turns to the deeper matters of what He is saying.

2. **That Which Does Defile.**
   A. **Mark 7:20-23**
   
   B. What defiles a man?
      1. “that which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man.” v.20
      2. That which proceeds out of man comes out of his heart, v.21
         a. The word for heart is kardia.
         b. Here it refers to the whole of man, that which he truly is.
         c. The thoughts and actions of his mind.
   C. As Jesus continues He speaks of that which proceeds from the heart and defiles a man,
      1. This list can be divided into 12 or 13 conditions which defile.
      2. This list also consists of two groups.
         a. Evil acts.
         b. Moral defects.
D. Let's consider these conditions of the heart.

1. Evil Thoughts -
   a. The foundation for evil acts.
   b. These are well considered acts. This man realizes what he is doing.

2. Fornication's - (NIV - Sexual immorality) - Every kind of sexual corruption.

3. Thefts - A mean, deceitful, dishonorable pilferer, John 12:6 - Judas

4. Murders -

5. Adulteries -

6. Greediness - (NAS - Deeds of coveting) -
   a. From two Greek words which mean - to have more.
   b. The spirit which snatches at that which is not right to take.
   c. The lust in the heart of man who sees happiness in things.

7. Iniquities - (NIV - Malice) (NAS - Wickedness)
   a. This represents the man in whose heart there is the desire to harm.
   b. The word for evil is used in reference to Satan - the Evil one.
   c. So this evil not only affects the man who has it, but others too.

8. Deceit -
   a. Comes from a word which means bait and is used for trickery
   b. The idea of a mousetrap
   c. Fraud - concealed dishonesty

9. Lewdness - (NAS - Sensuality)
   a. A disposition of the soul that resents all discipline.
   b. The one who is lost to decency and to shame.
   c. This individual never hesitates to shock his fellow man.

10. An evil eye - (NIV, NAS - Envy)
    a. The eye that looks at the success and happiness of another in such a way that it would cast an evil spell upon it if it could.
    b. This individual actually grieves at the happiness of others.

11. Blasphemy - (NIV, NAS - Slander)
    a. The idea of insulting man or God.
    b. Abusive language against man or God.

12. Arrogance - (NAS - Pride)
    a. Showing oneself above
    b. The attitude of a man who has a certain contempt for everyone except himself.
    c. The Greeks also used this to describe an attitude that may never become public. This individual may seem humble but in his heart be proud.
    d. Yet, sometimes this pride is evident.
13. Foolishness - (NIV - Folly)
   a. This is not brainless folly or a weak intellect
   b. It describes the man who chooses to play the fool.

   E. Jesus also explains why these defile a man, these things are evil, v.23.
   1. They are things which are contrary to God’s nature,
      a. 1John 1:5
      b. Eph. 5:7-12
   2. They are those things which come from man, Rom. 1:28-31
   3. They are works of the flesh, Gal. 5:29-31

**Appl:** This must have been a startling revelation for Jesus’ disciples who had been trained by these scribes and Pharisee’s in the idea of spiritual purity through these rituals.

Jesus is telling them that fellowship with God is not destroyed because of foods or unclean hands. It is destroyed because of the sin that comes forth from mans heart.

The religious leaders of Jesus’ time could have washed their hands a hundred times a day and this would not have made them spiritually pure. As long as their hearts were filled with sin and they turned from God’s commands to follow their man made traditions they remained defiled. Why?

**True spiritual defilement is a condition of the heart and is a result of neglecting Gods commands**

**Con:** The same is true for us. Unless we examine ourselves and seek true spiritual purity by being obedient to Gods commands and work at removing sin from our lives, we will be found to be spiritually defiled.

No amount of attending Sunday, or Wednesday services will change this. No amount of works will make us spiritually pure if we continue to allow sin to be enthroned upon our hearts.

These acts only find favor with God when they are coupled with a mind that seeks to obey His commands of removing sin from ones life and living pure and Holy before Him by continuing to obey His commands.

**Inv:**
Thankfully God has provided a way for us to accomplish true spiritual purification.
1. We start down that road of spiritual purification when we believe in Jesus as our Lord and Savior. The one who died for our sins, John 8:24

2. At the realization of this fact, we must determine to set our mind on a path of spiritual purification. We are compelled to repent and turn from our sins, Acts 17:30

3. We continue towards spiritual purification as we confess Christ as our sovereign Lord, Matt.10:32

4. We take the final step into spiritual purification as we obey God’s command to be baptized. It is here that we receive the forgiveness of our sins in obedience to His will. It is here that we enter into a covenant relationship with God and find ourselves consecrated to His service, Acts 22:16

5. From this point on we continue to live a life consecrated to God, seeing ourselves as instruments of righteousness, carrying out His will in our lives Rom. 6:7,12,13