

## Have you had a heart check lately? (1 Samuel 16:1-7 & Mark 7:1-23) 10-Aug-25

### **1 Samuel 16:1-7**

#### **Samuel Anoints David**

16 The Lord said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

<sup>2</sup> But Samuel said, "How can I go? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me."

The Lord said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.' <sup>3</sup> Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

<sup>4</sup> Samuel did what the Lord said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

<sup>5</sup> Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.

Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

<sup>6</sup> When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the Lord's anointed stands here before the Lord."

<sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

### **Mark 7:1-23**

#### **That Which Defiles**

7 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from

Jerusalem gathered around Jesus <sup>2</sup> and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. <sup>3</sup> (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. <sup>4</sup> When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they

wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

<sup>5</sup> So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

<sup>6</sup> He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“‘These people honour me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.

<sup>7</sup> They worship me in vain;  
their teachings are merely human rules.’

<sup>8</sup> You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

<sup>9</sup> And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! <sup>10</sup> For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ <sup>11</sup> But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— <sup>12</sup> then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. <sup>13</sup> Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

<sup>14</sup> Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. <sup>15</sup> Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” <sup>[16]</sup>

<sup>17</sup> After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. <sup>18</sup> “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? <sup>19</sup> For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

<sup>20</sup> He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. <sup>21</sup> For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup> adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. <sup>23</sup> All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

It would be good to have your **Bibles opened** at – Mark 7:1-23

There’s an **outline** for you to take **notes**. Let me **pray** first.

Let’s pray...

### Intro/Heart?

Have you had a **heart check** lately?

### **[Slide-Heart Check]**

If you’re **over 45 years old** – it’s **recommended** you have **regular heart checks!**

(pause)

In our passage this morning from Mark 7 – Jesus’ is talking about a different heart check.

### [Slide-Heart]

The **Greek** word used for **heart** in this passage is **kardia** – it’s where we get words like **cardiology** [study of the heart] – or **cardiac arrest** [ which means literally your heart stops!]

The Greek word used here in Mark 7 is not talking about our physical heart pumping blood but about our spiritual heart

It’s the **centre of our spiritual life**

The heart here means – our soul and mind – the seat of our thoughts, passions, desires, appetites and the acts of our character and will.

We start with a **thought or desire** – then we are **stirred to act on those thoughts and desires**.

(pause)

We pick up the story in verse 1 of Mark 7 – where *the Pharisees and some teachers of the law have come from Jerusalem* – and in verse 2 - *they see Jesus’ disciples eating food with hands that were defiled – that is unwashed!*

What we are going to see here is that the **Pharisees and Jesus** have a **totally different perspective** on what is important to God

### [Slide-1<sup>st</sup> Point]

1<sup>st</sup> Point – **Does God want - Clean Hands or Clean Hearts?** (verses 3 to 7)

- Handwashing here - is not **just grabbing soap and washing your hands**
- It's **ceremonial washing** [describe the process – and it includes plus pots and pans - plus between each course of the meal]
- Back in the OT in **Leviticus 22** – this kind of washing was required by God for the priests – as they made sacrifices for sin on behalf of the people – but here in Mark 7 - the **Pharisees have changed the rule to force everyone to do it!**
- You see – The Pharisees have **come from the marketplace** (verse 4) and they might have **accidentally come in contact with a Gentile** (non-Jew) and **they are defiled or unclean**. It's like they've got the idea sin and uncleanness is contagious by touch!
- Anyway - **they have a go at Jesus** – v5 – because **His disciples are eating food with defiled hands** – it's like they are saying “*your disciples are not as holy and righteous as us?*”
- Jesus calls them **hypocrites** [literally play actors in Greek] – someone who says one thing but does the opposite – they say they are holy but they are not – they have clean hands but not clean hearts – they are clean on the outside but not on the inside – they are physically clean but not spiritually clean
- In vv6-7 - Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13 – ‘*These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules*’
- Jesus is saying - **Isaiah was talking about you** when he prophesied this 700 years ago! You are all talk but **your hearts are unclean and far from God**. You

see - they wash their hands clean – but inside **they hate Jesus** and they're looking to catch Him out all the time!

- People were giving God - **lip service** - in Isaiah's day - AND - in Jesus' day – AND - it still happens today

### Application

What about us – how could we give God lip service but have hearts far from Him?

Here's a few ways:

- We come to **worship on Sunday** – tick the box – and don't think about God for the rest of the week
- **We say the Lord's prayer each week** but we don't even think about the meaning of the words anymore because we've said it so many times before!
- When **we sing the hymns each Sunday** – do we really focus on the words and remember that we are actually praising God – or are we just singing a song – like singing Dancing Queen?
- Our 1<sup>st</sup> Hymn this morning – asks God to **search our hearts today** – to see if there is any wicked ways – did we notice that?

- Our 2<sup>nd</sup> Hymn – tells how we can clean up our wicked hearts – and the answer is - WE can't! **What can wash away our sins? Nothing blood of Jesus!** Did we notice that? Do we believe it?
- In our last Hymn we are going to ask God - **to purify our hearts – like a refiner's fire purifies silver and gold** – and the hymn says - **that our heart's desire – is to be Holy.** Is that truly our heart's desire?
- These hymns are picked every week **to relate to the Bible readings** – so we can engage our hearts with God!
- **God wants clean hearts – not just clean hands and lip service!**
- Last week we **shared together in the Lord's Supper.** If we are not careful – we can just go through the motions and forget we are remembering Jesus' sacrifice. The Bread we share represents His Body broken on the cross and the juice represents His Blood poured for our sins to be forgiven!
- When we read our Bibles – **it's meant to be more than head knowledge – it's meant go into our hearts** – and then lead our hands to response. **It's head, heart and hands working together!**

- Are we more interested in **pleasing people and seeking human approval – than pleasing God**. If so, our hearts are divided? **God wants all of us.**

(pause)

And notice – this ceremonial washing was a **tradition** (verse 3, 4, 8)

Which brings us to the second point...

**[Slide-2<sup>nd</sup> Point]**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Point – Does God want us to follow – Human Traditions or God's Word?**

**(verses 8 to 13)**

Look at verse 8 - Jesus tells the Pharisees and teachers of the law - ***You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions***

Then in verses 9 to 13 – Jesus gives a classic example of where they have nullified God's commandment to "***honour your father and mother***" by overruling it with one of their **man-made traditions** called **Corban**.

**Corban** was a Jewish practice where **someone dedicated money or property to God as a gift** (Mark 7:11).

Once something was declared Corban, it was **considered set apart** for religious use and could not be used for anything else—even **to help one's parents**.

**Jesus condemned them** for using this corban tradition **to avoid their responsibility to care for their parents**.



It's like they are saying ***"Sorry, Mum and Dad, I can't help you—my money is already promised to God"***

**The Pharisees looked holy because they were dedicating their possessions to God – but their hearts towards their parents were hard and mean!**

### Application

The question is can we be **guilty** of putting tradition or personal preferences ahead of God's Word?

We can be guilty of putting traditions ahead of God's Word:

- When we value church property, pulpits, altars, or stained-glass windows more than we value caring for God's people.
- When we pour more money into church buildings than into Gospel ministry and evangelism—so we end up with "holy" buildings but not holy hearts.
- When we cling so tightly to the traditional words of hymns or prayers that we're ready to walk out the door if anything changes—**then perhaps worship might have become more about us than about God.**
- When we reject drums or guitars simply because we prefer the organ or piano—**shutting the door on other people's musical gifts for worship.**
- When "we've always done it this way" becomes our main reason for rejecting new and biblically faithful ways to worship.
- When we give generously to the church but show little love, mercy, or compassion in our home or workplace.

- When we expect everyone to read the Bible version we prefer—and treat other faithful translations as inferior.
- When we expect sermons to stay under 20 minutes and worship services under an hour—valuing our schedules over hearing from God.
- When we insist on certain dress codes—robes or otherwise—as if God's approval depended on outward appearance.
- When we come to church out of duty or habit, rather than gratitude to God for sending Jesus.
- When we turn the Sabbath into a burden instead of a gift—refusing joy or acts of mercy on that day and ignoring Jesus' own teaching about Sabbath rest.
- And if any of this offends us—well, the Pharisees were offended by Jesus for the same reason.

What Jesus is teaching here is that when any human rules or traditions, are elevated above Scripture, it can harden our hearts, hinder mercy, and distract us from showing the love of Jesus to others!

In John 13:34-35 – Jesus tells us how people will know we are Jesus people – and it's not by following human rules and traditions. Jesus says: ***"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."***

Which brings us to...

**[Slide-3<sup>rd</sup> Point]**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Point** – Does God want – **an Outside Clean or an Inside Clean?** (verses 14-23 and 1 Samuel 16:1-7)

He **addresses the crowd** gathered with the **Pharisees and teachers of the law** – and **makes a very telling point**

V15 - ***Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them***

To put it plainly – He says – verse 19 – **whatever we put into our mouths does not go into our hearts (soul/mind) but goes into our stomachs and eventually down the toilet! It can't damage our soul or mind or damage us spiritually!**

We need to side track slightly at verse 19 – because in brackets at the end of verse 19 it says – ***in saying this, Jesus is declared all foods clean!***

This **can seem quite confusing** for us because in the **Old Testament (Leviticus 11)** there a **whole heap of food laws** for Israel to follow. For example, we all know **Jews don't eat pork because pigs are deemed unclean.**

**The food laws** were **given to set Israel apart from the surrounding nations** (Leviticus 11:44–45) — a visible, daily reminder that they were **God's holy people**. These food laws were also **practical rules** in a **wilderness setting** - to avoid certain food-borne illnesses.

But the **main reason for the food laws** was **Jewish identity** and **holiness**, not just health.

But Jesus brings in the new covenant — **God's people are no longer marked by dietary boundaries but by faith in Jesus Christ.**

The food laws had served their purpose in pointing to the need for holiness, **but now holiness is about the heart, not the food menu** (Mark 7:20–23).

This is consistent with the gospel message that **salvation is by grace through faith alone** — not “faith plus becoming Jewish.”

Jesus will send His disciples to preach the Good News of being saved for Heaven **by faith in Jesus' death and resurrection.**

They can't preach the Good News by saying “***Follow Jesus AND become a Jew and be circumcised and follow Jewish food laws***”. That would be wrongly adding to salvation by CHRIST ALONE!

(pause)

Back to Mark 7 – and **Jesus gives a list** of things that come from inside a person – **from their heart** – verses 21-22 - *evil thoughts—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.*

It's all these things on the inside of us - Jesus says –that **defiles us** (verse 23) – it's quite a list.

It challenges us to see that **people can look polite, respectful or religious on the outside** – but they can be unclean on the inside.

Take the Pharisees for example – they **wash their hands perfectly**, they **dedicate money to the temple**, they **pray publicly and beautifully on street corners** – but inside they are plotting to kill Jesus!

Notice Jesus includes sins that are both public and private, **showing that all sin is wrong** – not just the **sin society sees and condemns!**

**God sees our heart.**

In our Old Testament reading, from **1 Samuel 16:1-7** – God sends the **prophet Samuel** to **Bethlehem** to a man named **Jesse** to find and anoint the next King of Israel. Jesse has **eight sons** – seven of them are there in Bethlehem. When Samuel sees the first son, Eliab, he assumes because of his appearance and height, this son must be the one God wanted to be anointed as the next King.

But God tells Samuel in verse 7 ***“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”***

If we had continued reading – we would see that **God rejects all seven sons and chooses the one son not there – a little shepherd boy – **David** – as the next King!**  
Why?

Because **David is described elsewhere in the Bible** (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22) as ***“a man after God’s own heart”***

**God looks at the heart!**

Here’s a scary piece of the Bible for us to think about – King David says this about God in Psalm 139

*<sup>1</sup> You have searched me, Lord, and you know me.*

*<sup>2</sup> You know when I sit and when I rise; you perceive my thoughts from afar.*

**God knows all our thoughts!**

He knows our hearts!

Does this concern you? **It concerns me!**

Do I want you guys to see a video of my thoughts?

**God has a record of all of lives and all of our thoughts!**

Do you want to see yours?

(pause)

### Response

We began by asking “***Have you had a heart check, lately?***”

### **[Slide-Spiritual Heart Check]**

Surely a response to all of this – this morning – is **to have a spiritual heart check**

Our prayer must be – from King David’s Psalm 139 – verses 23 and 24:

<sup>23</sup> *Search me, God, and know my heart;*

*test me and know my anxious thoughts.*

<sup>24</sup> *See if there is any offensive way in me,*

*and lead me in the way everlasting.*

Our prayer has to be - to ask God to reveal the thoughts and behaviours in our hearts that need to be confessed and removed – and to ask God to lead us in the way everlasting – that is to **follow Jesus who is the way, the truth and the life that leads to Heaven.**

## Conclusion

Let me finish with a simple riddle:

*"I show you yourself, but I am not you.*

*I move when you move, I do what you do.*

*What am I?"*

Answer: **A Mirror**

Perhaps when we get home this arvo – let's took a look in the mirror – and take a good look ourselves and join King David in saying this to God from Psalm 51:17

**[Slide-Psalm 51:17]**

***<sup>17</sup> My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit;***

***a broken and contrite heart***

***you, God, will not despise.***

Let's pray...

Lord God, we confess that sometimes we focus on appearances while neglecting our hearts. Forgive us for the times we honour You with our lips but not with our lives. Cleanse us from the sin that flows from within—pride, envy, selfishness, and hypocrisy. Create in us clean hearts, O God, and renew a right spirit within us. Help us to love You sincerely and walk in true obedience. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.