

Keeping it Real
Mark 7:1-23

I. Intro

- A. Jesus gets really specific with the Pharisees, the law doesn't make you right before God.
- B. The practice of obedience is so misunderstood at times.
 - 1. We either deny the importance of obedience, abusing God's grace...
 - 2. Or, we obey so we can show how deserving we are of God's grace...
 - 3. Or, we act and look right in the eyes of people, while our heart is far from God
 - 4. Or we try all that and give up somewhere along the way
- C. Relationship is greater than Religion
- D. The fruit of relationship is an overflow of the righteousness of Christ, fruit produced by Christ's presence.

II. Text

- A. Verses 1-5: Hand Washing
 - 1. The Pharisees practiced hand washing as a religious ritual of purification rather than physical hygiene, extending the Temple's priestly rules into everyday domestic life. They washed up to the elbows, poured measured amounts of clean water over their fingers, and followed specific hand positions based on the oral traditions of the elders.
 - 2. The practice:
 - a) Used specially designated, ceremonially clean water.
 - b) Poured water over the hands up to the wrist or elbow.
 - c) Held fingers upward initially so dirty water drained downward off the hand, and sometimes repeated the process with fingers pointed downward to ensure complete purification.
 - d) Rubbed a closed fist into the palm of the other hand.
 - 3. It was all about the ritual, and not about the actual cleansing.
- B. Verses 6-8
 - 1. He calls them Hypocrites: Hypo: under Crit: an audience of critics
 - 2. They put on a show of washing their hands, but did not actually clean their hands.
- C. Verses 9-13: The illustration of how they are not actually honoring their father and mother
- D. Verses 14-15: The Message
- E. Verses 16-19:
 - 1. Verse 16: He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Is not in most of the original transcripts
 - 2. Verses 17-19: It is not about the practice of the law...
- F. Verses 20-23:
 - 1. What is important is what is produced by the practice of Faith.
 - 2. If your practice of faith helps you to look right before your peers, but produces evil things, it is not a real faith walk.

III. Points

- A. Real Faith
 - 1. At some point in your journey you have to look deeply into your faith.
 - a) Do I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for Salvation?
 - b) Am I trusting in my ability and strength, or am I releasing control to Christ?
 - 2. Real faith is a constant, every day, trusting Christ for everything.
 - 3. We certainly don't get this right all the time, but the heart of the matter matters most.
 - 4. [Pro 4:20-27 ESV] 20 My son, be attentive to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. 21 Let them not escape from your sight; keep them within your heart. 22 For they are life to those who find them, and healing to all their flesh. 23 Keep your

heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life. 24 Put away from you crooked speech, and put devious talk far from you. 25 Let your eyes look directly forward, and your gaze be straight before you. 26 Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure. 27 Do not swerve to the right or to the left; turn your foot away from evil.

5. Guard your heart with all vigilance
6. From it flows the SPRINGS OF LIFE
7. This is where we see the fruit of an authentic relationship with God.

B. Real Hope

1. Hope is faith with confidence, faith that has matured to a type of expectation based upon a walk with Christ.
2. Illustration: As a Dallas Cowboys fan, I wish they would win the Super Bowl again, as a man with some measure of intelligence, I have no hope they will.
3. Hope should be a force in our Faith Walk.
 - a) Hope empowers us
 - b) Hope overcomes our doubts
 - c) Hope allows us to walk in liberty.
4. We have seen this truth in action, will we also believe this?
5. I have hope for you, your family, our church, and our community...because of the work of Jesus!
6. Humanity does not give me hope, only Christ.
7. Misplaced hope will leave you empty, frustrated, and bitter.

C. Real Love

1. When you really love Jesus, you produce something that honors Him.
2. When you Love well, you submit yourself to the transforming power of the gospel.
3. When you are in the process of transformation:
 - a) You realize the ritual of hand washing, and actual hand washing are two very different things
 - b) Illustration: as a youth minister I felt compelled to educate the young men in my cabin at camp to practice proper hygiene.
 - (1) The rules were simple: use soap, swimming in the pool at rec did not count, and to do so as often as necessary, but at least once a day.
 - (2) Why did I have to make these rules? Because some would get in the shower and get wet, but never got clean, this has had a less than positive impact on the spiritual nurturing of the entire group.
 - c) The true washing was way more important than the ritual washing.
4. When the pharisees washed, they were practicing a bunch of made up rules that were not commanded by God, but were put into religious practice in order to look good and pious before men.
5. This is still a problem in the church.
6. Real love for Christ and His church will produce a real reaction.
7. When your heart belongs to Christ, what comes from your life will reflect that.
8. When your heart is worldly, you may look right, but you are not right.
9. Things mentioned in this text today:
 - a) evil thoughts
 - b) sexual immorality
 - c) theft
 - d) murder
 - e) adultery
 - f) coveting
 - g) wickedness
 - h) deceit
 - i) sensuality
 - j) envy

- k) slander
 - l) pride
 - m) foolishness
10. A challenging list, but a list we know all too well.
11. Let Christ change your heart, and produce
- a) Love: Caring for others without selfish wants.
 - b) Joy: A deep inner gladness from God.
 - c) Peace: Calmness in your mind and heart.
 - d) Patience: Staying steady when things are hard.
 - e) Kindness: Showing a sweet and helpful spirit.
 - f) Goodness: Doing what is right and honest.
 - g) Faithfulness: Being loyal and true to God and people.
 - h) Gentleness: Being mild and humble.
 - i) Self-Control: Managing your own acts and desires.
12. One of my favorite passages is found in 2 Peter 1
13. [2Pe 1:3-11 ESV] 3 His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, 4 by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. 5 For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, 6 and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, 7 and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love. 8 For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. 10 Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fall. 11 For in this way there will be richly provided for you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.
- D. Close
- 1. Don't misplace your faith
 - 2. Don't misplace your hope
 - 3. Don't misplace your love
 - 4. Fall deeply in love with Christ, and grow in relationship with Him.
 - 5. The rules will never fill you, the presence of Christ will.