

SERIES TITLE: Servant King

PART SEVEN: DISTANCING

TEXT: MARK 7:1-23

INTRODUCTION TO STUDY

The gospel of Mark portrays Jesus as a Servant on the move. Using the word “immediately” over 40 times, he shows Jesus ministering. Obedient to the Father’s will, Jesus preaches the good news, heals the sick, teaches his followers, and performs miracles. All the while, he heads toward his sacrificial death on the cross. Mark 10:45 sums up his mission: “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.” Mark’s gospel reveals Jesus to be the perfect Servant and the perfect Sacrifice. Those who receive him as the good news are empowered to serve in his name.

CONTEXT OF SCRIPTURE

The scribes and Pharisees travel from Jerusalem to question Jesus regarding his adherence to the Law. Jesus responds by teaching about the dangers of equating man-made tradition with God-given Scripture. Only God can cleanse us on the inside.

FOCUS QUESTION

Can you think of an activity or tradition that you participate in every year, even though you don’t really enjoy it? Why do you do it?

EXAMINATION

7:1-5 For what reason would the Pharisees and teachers leave Jerusalem?

What does the Old Testament say about handwashing and who was it for? (See Exodus 30:19, 40:1

Why would they criticize Jesus for what the disciples are doing?

7:6-8 Do you see Jesus’ response as harsh or just? Why?

What does Jesus point to as the real problem?

Why would the religious elders create traditions, and what could be wrong with them?

7:9-13 Consider the use of the word “Corban” in the Old Testament (most are in Leviticus and Numbers). Corban is translated as “offering.” Scan Leviticus 1 and 2 to get a sense of the meaning.

How were people misusing the Corban principle in Jesus’ day?

How do we know this is just one example of “nullifying the word of God”?

7:14-23 Would Jesus' words about defilement have been shocking to his audience? Why or why not?

In what sense are the evil thoughts Jesus lists be defiling if they are simply in the heart?

EXPLORATION

- Proverbs 4:18-23
- Isaiah 29:13-14, 19
- Luke 10:25-37
- Acts 10:9-15, 34-35, 44-45
- Titus 1:10-16

APPLICATION

- What does religion that is all externalized look like?
- What are some practical things you can do to avoid insincere worship?
- Can you think of any traditions or practices in your experience that have become more important than God's word?
- Do you think anyone can honestly say they are not guilty of at least most of those "evil thoughts" Jesus listed when you consider what Jesus says in Matthew 5:27ff?
- With that guilt in mind, what is the solution to cleanse the evil inside of us? (1 John 1:9, 1 Peter 1:18-19, Hebrews 9:14)

SUMMATION

- Fact: What are key truths that you understood from this passage?
- React: What did you feel?
- Act: What are you going to do?