

“Who do you say that I am?” Mark - Part 7

The One Who Understands the Problem

Mark 7:1-23

February 5th, 2017

I. The QUESTION of WASHING. (v.1-5)

A. It's INTERESTING what people SEE. (6:56; 7:1-2; Mt. 6:22)

B. DRAWING clear LINES. (v.3-5)

Our text today is a bit unusual for Mark. He spends time focusing in on what Jesus was saying, more than what Jesus was doing. It concerns the fact that the Pharisees noticed that Jesus' disciples weren't doing the customary ceremonial washing that all the “good” Jews would have done. Jesus, their rabbi, was responsible for this departure from accepted practice, so they asked Him about it.

1. Would you describe yourself as someone who sees the good in people or someone who sees the bad? Why do you think you are that way? Would you like it to change?
2. Faith and truth do draw lines, contradictory ideas can't both be true. But what do you see as dangers when we draw lines in regards to people and their actions?

II. JESUS and His “NON-ANSWER”. (v.6-13)

A. Strong WORDS from ISAIAH. (v.6-7)

B. Jesus MAKES the ACCUSATION. (v.8)

C. Using LINES to make LOOPHOLES. (v.9-13)

As usual, Jesus answers the question in a way that surprises those who asked it. At first it seems like a “non-answer”, but as you read it you realize that He is answering the question and provoking about a thousand more. He begins by taking an Old Testament text written in judgment, and tells the religious leaders of the day that Isaiah was talking about them...

3. In what ways have you found yourself going through the motions in regards to your faith, instead of actually engaging the heart? How can you learn from or avoid that in the future?
4. What are some “traditions of men” that we have elevated to Biblical status, both in the past and currently?
5. How can we be sure that what we think is Biblical isn't just elevating our interpretation? What role does the larger body play in that discerning process?

III. The HEART of the PROBLEM. (v.14-23)

A. The heart IS the PROBLEM. (v.14-19)

B. We are the UNCLEAN side of the LINE. (v.20-23)

Who is Mark saying Jesus is? Jesus is the one who understands the true nature of the problem that faces us as human beings. In this rare (for Mark) glimpse of Jesus' teaching, we see that the problem we have is the heart. Our actions don't change what is on the inside...it's actually the other way around. What is inside drives our actions.

6. When have you known the right thing to do and still not been able to do it?
7. What role do outer actions play in our own faith?

IV. HEARING what Jesus is SAYING...

A. Be CAREFUL drawing LINES. (v.6-13; 12:41-44)

B. Sit UNDER Scripture, not OVER it. (v.8; John 5:39-40)

C. EXTERNAL methods don't solve INTERNAL issues. (v.14-19; Mt. 23:27-28)

D. The SOURCE for a new HEART. (Ezek. 36:25-27; II Cor. 5:17)

If we have ears to hear...let's make sure that we are hearing what Jesus is saying. Mark is reminding us to take our cues for faith from the One who sees from an infinitely larger perspective than we could even imagine. The good news is that not only does He understand the problem, but He embodies the solution...as seen in the table we share today.

8. What lines have you drawn in the past that you wish you had not?
9. How can we know if we are sitting over Scripture instead of under it? How willing and open are we to changing our positions? Questioning our positions?
10. Jesus gives us a new heart, but what does our inability to act out that new character mean?