

**“The Thoughts of the Heart”**  
**Mark 7:1-23**

Introduction: The Bible has many things to speak of when it deals with our heart.

1. The Defilements of the Heart Genesis 6:5- *“And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.”*
2. The Dedication of the Heart I Chronicles 29:18- *“O LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, our fathers, keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of thy people, and prepare their heart unto thee”*
  - a. Ezra 7:10- *“For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.”*
  - b. II Chronicles 17:6- *“And his [Jehoshaphat] heart was lifted up in the ways of the LORD: moreover he took away the high places and groves out of Judah.”*
  - c. II Chronicles 12:14- *“And he [Rehoboam] did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.”*
3. The Deceptiveness of the Heart Acts 8:22- *“Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.”* [When Simon tried to give Peter and John money for the power of the Holy Ghost.]
4. The Discerning of the Heart Hebrews 4:12- *“For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”*
  - a. The Hard Heart Hebrews 3:8- *“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness”*
    - (1) Hebrews 3:15- *“While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.”*
    - (2) Hebrews 4:7- *“Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.”*
  - b. The Erring Heart Hebrews 3:10- *“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.”*
  - c. The Evil Heart Hebrews 3:12- *“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.”*

Body: Let us have a heart examination.

- I. The Examination of a Few Mark 7:1-5
  - II. The Exposure of a Fake Mark 7:6-13
  - III. The Education of a Father Mark 7:14-16
  - IV. The Explanation of a Fact Mark 7:17-23
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- I. The Examination of a Few Mark 7:1-5
    - A. Their Criticisms vs. 1-2

1. The Jewish religious leaders were now openly hostile toward the Lord and His ministry. It was not unusual for them to follow Him from place to place simply to watch for something to criticize.
  2. Here was One who could walk upon the raging deep, and “they found fault.” Here was One who could feed people by the thousands with next to nothing, and “they found fault.” Here was One who “went about doing good,” who spoke as never any man spoke before, and “they found fault.”
  3. Our Lord had already violated their Sabbath traditions (Mark 2:23-3:5), so the Jews were eager to accuse Him when they saw the disciples eat “with defiled hands.”
  4. Matthew 23:4- *“For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”* [They will not even lift a finger to help them carry the burden.]
- B. Their Customs vs. 3-5 (They magnified the outward ritual and not the inward reality.)

II. The Exposure of a Fake Mark 7:6-13

A. A False Spirituality v. 6 Isaiah 29:13

B. A False Standard vs. 7-9

1. We must constantly beware lest tradition take the place of truth.
2. This dramatic lesson on “truth vs. tradition” could only irritate the Jewish religious leaders more and make them want to silence Jesus.
3. These washings not only indicated a wrong attitude toward people, but they also conveyed a wrong idea of the nature of sin and personal holiness.
4. Jesus made it clear in the Sermon on the Mount that true holiness is a matter of inward affection and attitude and not just outward actions and associations.
5. So the conflict was not only between God’s truth and man’s tradition, but also between two divergent views of sin and holiness.
6. Notice the four ways that these Pharisees and scribes handled the Word of God:
  - a. Mark 7:7- *“...teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”*
  - b. Mark 7:8- *“...laying aside the commandment of God...”*
  - c. Mark 7:9- *“...ye reject the commandment of God...”*
  - d. Mark 7:13- *“Making the word of God of none effect...”*

C. A False Sincerity vs. 10-13

1. Once He had exposed their hypocrisy, Jesus then turned to the Law of Moses and indicted them for breaking the fifth commandment.
2. Jesus says the Pharisees twist God’s laws to avoid the responsibility of financially supporting their own parents.
3. Exodus 20:12- *“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.”*
4. Exodus 21:17- *“And he that curseth his father, or his mother, shall surely be put to death.”*

5. Leviticus 20:9- *“For every one that curseth his father or his mother shall be surely put to death: he hath cursed his father or his mother; his blood shall be upon him.”*
6. They were, by Corban, saying, “I have dedicated all that I have to God,” thus giving him a rabbinical loophole for evading his most obvious and basic duty—to care for his aged parents.
7. They had an ingenious way of breaking the Law and not feeling guilty. Instead of using their wealth to support their parents, the Pharisees dedicated that wealth to God (“Corban” = “an offering, a gift”; see Num. 30) and claimed that the wealth could now be used only for “spiritual purposes.” However, they continued to get the benefit of that wealth, even though it technically belonged to God. These men claimed to love God, but they had no love for their parents!

### III. The Education of a Father Mark 7:14-16

#### A. A Lesson on Pollution vs. 14-15

1. Jesus says defilement has nothing to do with what one eats but rather with what one says and does.
2. We must remember that these twelve men had been brought up under the strict Jewish dietary code that categorized all foods as either “clean” or “unclean” (Lev. 11). In fact, Acts 10:14 suggests that Peter kept a kosher household for years even after he had heard this truth. It is not easy to change our religious traditions.
3. The intake of supposedly unclean food does not cause defilement.
4. I Peter 4:3-4- *“Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving”*
5. The Jewish dietary laws were given by God to teach His chosen people to make a difference between what was clean and what was unclean. (No doubt there were also some practical reasons involved, such as sanitation and health.) To disobey these laws was a matter of ceremonial defilement, and that was an external matter. Food *ends up* in the stomach, but sin *begins* in the heart. The food we eat is digested and the waste evacuated, but sin remains and it produces defilement and death.

#### B. A Lesson on Perception v. 16

1. Now He turned from the scribes and the Pharisees to the multitudes.
2. There was little hope for the leaders of the establishment; they were already set in their ways.
3. The expression “he that hath ears to hear, let him hear” are the Lord’s alone. He employed it seven times while on earth and eight times after His ascension.
4. He always used the expression to call particular attention to what He was saying.

### IV. The Explanation of a Fact Mark 7:17-23

- A. The Confusion of the Hearers vs. 17-20
1. They failed to get the point.
  2. All of this was just a natural physical function. What and how we eat does not affect our souls, only our physical well-being. Moreover, the body has its own way of disposing of its impure waste products.
  3. All ceremonial rules regarding clean and unclean meats were only temporary.
- B. The Corruptions of the Heart vs. 21-23
- The Jews were satisfied with mere physical cleanliness, ignoring the need for inner cleanliness. Legalism often substitutes outward forms for true holiness.
  - Jeremiah 17:9- *“The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”*
  - In the Greek text, the first seven are in the plural; the remaining six are in the singular.
  - These are the things that wreck homes and ruin lives; they start wars and spread disease. These are the things that were placed upon the Lord at Calvary and for which He would have to die.
1. Evil Thoughts v. 21
    - a. “evil” (Strong’s)- “of a bad nature; not such as it ought to be; troublesome, injurious, pernicious, destructive, baneful”
    - b. “evil” (Webster’s)- “Having bad qualities of a moral kind; wicked; corrupt; perverse; wrong; as evil thoughts; evil deeds; evil speaking; an evil generation.”
  2. Adulteries v. 21
    - a. “adulteries” (Strong’s)- “have unlawful intercourse with another's wife”
    - b. “adultery” (Webster’s)- “Violation of the marriage bed”
    - c. Luke 16:18- *“Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”*
    - d. Matthew 5:28- *“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”*
  3. Fornications v. 21
    - a. “fornications” (Strong’s)- “illicit sexual intercourse; adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc.”
    - b. “fornication” (Webster’s)- “The incontinence or lewdness of unmarried persons, male or female”
    - c. I Corinthians 7:2- *“Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”*
  4. Murders v. 21
    - a. “murders” (Strong’s)- “slaughter”
    - b. “murder” (Webster’s)- “The act of unlawfully killing a human being with premeditated malice, by a person of sound mind.”
    - c. Exodus 20:13- *“Thou shalt not kill.”*
    - d. I John 3:14-15- *“We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”*

- e. I John 4:20- *“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?”*
5. Thefts v. 22
- “thefts” (Strong’s)- “to steal; take away by stealth”
  - “theft” (Webster’s)- “The act of stealing. In law, the private, unlawful, felonious taking of another person's goods or movables, with an intent to steal them. To constitute theft, the taking must be in private or without the owner's knowledge, and it must be unlawful or felonious, that is, it must be with a design to deprive the owner of his property privately and against his will. Theft differs from robbery, as the latter is a violent taking from the person, and of course not private.”
  - Exodus 20:15- *“Thou shalt not steal.”*
  - Leviticus 19:11- *“Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.”*
6. Covetousness v. 22
- “covetousness” (Strong’s)- “greedy desire to have more; one eager to have more, esp. what belongs to others; greedy of gain”
  - “covetousness” (Webster’s)- “A strong or inordinate desire of obtaining and possessing some supposed good; usually in a bad sense, and applied to an inordinate desire of wealth or avarice.”
  - Exodus 20:17- *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.”*
  - Luke 12:15- *“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”*
7. Wickedness v. 22
- “wickedness” (Strong’s)- “depravity; evil purposes and desires; of a bad nature or condition”
  - “wickedness” (Webster’s)- “Departure from the rules of the divine law; evil disposition or practices; immorality; crime; sin; sinfulness; corrupt manners Wickedness generally signifies evil practices.”
  - Luke 11:39- *“And the Lord said unto him, Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.”*
8. Deceit v. 22
- “deceit” (Strong’s)- “craft; guile; catch by a bait”
  - “deceit” (Webster’s)- “Literally, a catching or ensnaring. Hence, the misleading of a person; the leading of another person to believe what is false, or not to believe what is true, and thus to ensnare him; fraud; fallacy; cheat; any declaration, artifice or practice, which misleads another, or causes him to believe what is false.”
  - Romans 3:13- *“Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips”*

- d. Proverbs 12:20- *“Deceit is in the heart of them that imagine evil: but to the counsellors of peace is joy.”*
  - e. Psalm 50:19- *“Thou givest thy mouth to evil, and thy tongue frameth deceit.”*
9. Lasciviousness v. 22
- a. “lasciviousness” (Strong’s)- “unbridled lust, excess; wantonness; The fundamental idea of is wastefulness and riotous excess; lawless insolence and wanton thoughts of the mind; reckless and extravagant expenditure, chiefly for the gratification of one's sensual desires; the fundamental thought is the acknowledging of no restraints, the proud doing of whatever one's thoughts of the mind may suggest”
  - b. “lasciviousness” (Webster’s)- “Looseness; irregular indulgence of animal desires; wantonness; lustfulness.”
  - c. I Peter 4:3- *“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries”*
  - d. Jude 1:4- *“For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.”*
  - e. Ephesians 4:19- *“Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.”*
10. An Evil Eye v. 22
- a. “evil” (Strong’s)- “full of labours, annoyances, hardships; of a bad nature or condition”
  - b. “eye” (Strong’s)- “the eyes of the mind, the faculty of knowing”
  - c. Proverbs 28:22- *“He that hasteth to be rich hath an evil eye, and considereth not that poverty shall come upon him.”*
11. Blasphemy v. 22
- a. “blasphemy” (Strong’s)- “slander, detraction, speech injurious, to another's good name; speaking evil, slanderous, reproachful, railing, abusive”
  - b. “blasphemy” (Webster’s)- “reproachful, contemptuous or irreverent words”
  - c. Revelation 13:6- *“And he [the Anti-Christ] opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.”*
12. Pride v. 22
- a. “pride” (Strong’s)- “haughtiness, arrogance; the character of one who, with a swollen estimate of his own powers or merits, looks down on others and even treats them with overbearance and despite”
  - b. “pride” (Webster’s)- “Inordinate self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, rank or elevation in office, which manifests itself in lofty airs, distance, reserve, and often in contempt of others.”

- c. Proverbs 8:13- *“The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.”*
  - d. Proverbs 13:10- *“Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.”*
13. Foolishness v. 22
- a. “foolishness” (Strong’s)- “senselessness; thoughtlessness, recklessness; without reason; without reflection or intelligence, acting rashly”
  - b. “foolishness” (Webster’s)- “folly; want of understanding; want of wisdom or good judgment”
  - c. Proverbs 15:2- *“The tongue of the wise useth knowledge aright: but the mouth of fools poureth out foolishness.”*
  - d. Proverbs 15:14- *“The heart of him that hath understanding seeketh knowledge: but the mouth of fools feedeth on foolishness.”*
  - e. Proverbs 24:9- *“The thought of foolishness is sin: and the scorner is an abomination to men.”*

Conclusion: Psalm 139:23-24