

**Its What Comes From Inside that Counts**  
**On the Way: A Journey Through the Gospel of Mark**  
**Gospel of Mark**  
**May 31, 2026**  
**Mark 7:1-23**

**Sermon Points:**

**I. The Modern Equivalent of "Unclean Hands"**

- The Pharisees' accusation against the disciples for eating with "defiled hands" was less about hygiene and more about religious and cultural conformity.
- A modern equivalent is **virtue signaling**: conspicuously displaying awareness of issues to signal tribal belonging rather than taking effective action.
- This creates a "dark side" where failure to conform to specific social or religious norms leads to being attacked or "canceled".

**II. The Diagnosis: Lip Service vs. Heart Devotion**

- Jesus identifies the core issue as **hypocrisy**, quoting **Isaiah 29:13**: "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me".
- **Spiritual blindness** prevents people from seeing their own dire situation; they follow human rules while ignoring God's actual commands.
- Religious traditions can be used to "nullify the word of God," such as the practice of **Corban**, which prioritized religious offerings over the command to honor one's parents.

**III. The Source of True Defilement**

- Jesus declares that nothing entering a person from the outside (like food) can defile them.
- True defilement comes from within: "For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come".
- The list of internal evils includes sexual immorality, theft, murder, greed, malice, deceit, envy, and arrogance.
- It is possible to have a "**form of godliness**" while denying its power (**2 Timothy 3:5**).

**IV. The Futility of Human Effort**

- It is impossible to legislate morality or change the heart through rules, rituals, or behavior management.
- Success, counseling, and self-improvement—while helpful—cannot fill the "**God-shaped abyss**" within the soul.
- Keeping external purity laws can be a way of "papering over the crack" of a poisoned internal motivation.

## **V. The Cure: A Spiritual Heart Transplant**

- The answer is not better hygiene but a relationship with Jesus.
- The Christian life is about moving from "playing church" and duty-based performance to a heart transformed by God's **extravagant love**.
- God's grace has no strings attached; it is a gift for those who recognize their need for a Savior.

## **VI. Conclusion: The Heart Check**

- One can attend church, read the Bible, and pray eloquently, yet still have a heart far from God.
- The invitation is to move beyond external "religious" performance into a whole-heart transformation rooted in being known and loved by God.

