



CLEAN AND UNCLEAN HEARTS

Mark 7:14-23

In the Old Testament Law we find the words clean and unclean used well over 200 times

- **Leviticus 19:1-2 NLT** 1 The Lord also said to Moses, 2 “Give the following instructions to the entire community of Israel. You must be holy (clean) because I, the Lord your God, am holy.
 - You must be clean before me
 - If you want my blessings, be able to stand before me accepted, you must be clean

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- The Old Testament Law defined how to be clean before God and how to become clean after being unclean
- God never told them why something was defined as clean or unclean
- Things were clean or unclean simply because God declared them that way and the Jews were to trust God's definition of clean and unclean

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- **Genesis 2:15-17 NLT** 15 The Lord God placed the man in the Garden of Eden to tend and watch over it. 16 But the Lord God warned him, “You may freely eat the fruit of every tree in the garden— 17 except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. If you eat its fruit, you are sure to die.”

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- God defined the tree of the knowledge of good and evil unclean and all the other fruit trees in the garden clean
- God never told Adam why it was unclean
- God stated, “If you eat of that tree Adam you will be unclean and unable to stand before me as clean in/of yourself again

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- The word unclean also carries the idea of loathing something simple because God declares it unclean
- Not, I can eat this but not that, but my relationship with God is so special and desired, I loath anything that will interfere with it
- I choose to set myself apart from the unclean

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- So how could they maintain their clean status so they could stand before God accepted and worship Him?
- **Leviticus 20:7 NLT** 7 So set yourselves apart to be holy, for I am the Lord your God.
 - Set apart = Devoted to God, treat something as with special care, as something which belongs to God

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- Where does this happen in our lives?
 - In our hearts, minds, wills – where decisions are made either by will or emotion
 - How we see ourselves

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- Because we belong to God, we loath what God calls unclean
- **Genesis 3:6 NLT** She saw that the tree was beautiful and its fruit looked delicious, and she wanted the wisdom it would give her.

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- **1st Peter 1:13-16 NLT** 13 So prepare your minds for action and exercise self-control. Put all your hope in the gracious salvation that will come to you when Jesus Christ is revealed to the world. 14 So you must live as God's obedient children. Don't slip back into your old ways of living to satisfy your own desires. You didn't know any better then.

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- **1st Peter 1:13-16 NLT** 15 But now you must be holy in everything you do, just as God who chose you is holy.
16 For the Scriptures say, “You must be holy (clean, set apart) because I am holy.”

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- The definition of clean and unclean was at the heart of Jesus' problems with the religious leaders
- They defined clean as what they did, and Jesus was teaching that clean and unclean begins or is formed in our heart
- **Mark 7:14-23 NIV**

To the Jewish mind, the heart was the place of emotions and will of an individual and where personal decisions were made

- **Genesis 4:6-7 NLT** 6 “Why are you so angry?” the Lord asked Cain. “Why do you look so dejected? 7 You will be accepted (clean) if you do what is right. But if you refuse to do what is right, then watch out! Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you. But you must subdue it and be its master.”
 - I get the picture of a teeter-totter
 - One side or the other is going down

The concept of clean and unclean before God is so fundamentally important, Jesus stresses the point

- There are times with your children you really want to get your point across by saying, “Listen to me! Stop rolling your eyes and pay close attention because something unpleasant is about to happen if not.”
- Don't just listen to my words, understand the meaning and why

The concept of clean and unclean before God is so fundamentally important, Jesus stresses the point

- **Vs. 14 NLT** Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “All of you listen,” he said, “and try to understand.
 - Listen = To hear with attention and desire to obey, to hear effectually, to embrace

The concept of clean and unclean before God is so fundamentally important, Jesus stresses the point

- Jesus said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear and understand.”
 - Understand = Carries the idea of collecting the individual object into a whole, like the pieces of a puzzle and putting them together to see the picture

You have a Cain heart within you and unless that is mastered you will not be consistently clean before me

- You have a heart issue not a doing issue, a will issue not a doing issue, you have an emotion issue not a doing issue
- The doing is just a reflection of what is going on inside your will, emotions, heart, mind
- The Pharisees were saying, “You must ritually wash a certain way before you can be clean before God. You must observe our teaching on the Sabbath to be clean before God.

You have a Cain heart within you and unless that is mastered you will not be consistently clean before me

- **Vs. 6-7 NLT** 6 Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 7 Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.
- Hypocrites = actors, pretending to play a part, you have a mask of religion on, but your heart is far from God

You have a Cain heart within you and unless that is mastered you will not be consistently clean before me

- In other words, unclean before God
- **Vs. 20-22** are some really nasty things and Jesus is telling us, these all generate and flow from your heart
- **Vs 21 NLT** Sin originates in the heart or from the overflow of the heart, sinful acts are done

There is only one cure for a Cain heart and that is to be born again through the finished work of Jesus Christ

- You need a new heart, desire, will to offset the rebellious heart of flesh and learn to live by that new nature rather than the old rebellious nature we were born with
- **John 3:3 NLT** 3 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God.”

There is only one cure for our evil hearts and that is to be born again through the finished work of Jesus Christ

- **Ezekiel 36:26-27 NLT** 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.
 - Take out = no longer in control or master, take the power out of it away

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- **Romans 6:18 NLT** Now you are free from your slavery to sin, and you have become slaves to righteous living.
- **Romans 6:22 NLT** But now you are free from the power of sin
 - Not free from the presence of sin

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- **Ezekiel 36:26-27 NLT** 26 And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you (put in you) a tender, responsive heart. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.
 - Put in you = a new desire or power to stand before God clean

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- **2nd Corinthians 5:9 NLT** More than anything else, however, we want to please him, whether in our home here or there.

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Ephesians 4:22-24 NIV 22 You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; 23 to be made new in the attitude of your minds; 24 and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Understanding the full extent of our depravity is a helpful necessary

- We are very good at fooling ourselves that we are not as bad as others
- You will also trust in your ability to overcome sin by sheer human strength and will
- That God grades on a curve

Understanding the full extent of your depravity is a helpful necessary

- You will not fully grasp the grace given us by God
 - John Bradford, "There but for the grace of God, goes John Bradford", in reference to a group of prisoners being led to execution.
 - But for the grace of God, go I

Understanding the full extent of your depravity is a helpful necessary

- **1st Corinthians 15:9-10 NIV** 9 For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. 10 But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.

Understanding the full extent of your depravity is a helpful necessary

- Jesus Christ is the only cure for the disease of sin
 - **John 14:6 NLT** Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.
- No one can be clean before God except by and through applying the finished work of Christ and walking in His grace daily



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