

OPENING QUESTION

For many groups, this marks your first meeting together post-Christmas! Take some time to talk about how the holidays went – the good and the bad – and talk about what God has been teaching you over that time.

READ TOGETHER

Mark 7:1-23

BIG IDEA

It's not the stuff on the outside of your body that makes you unclean; it comes from inside.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The problem, Jesus says, is the heart. The heart in Jesus' teaching serves as a metaphor for the seat of moral decision making. **"Holiness is an inside job, not an outside job".**
 - a. What are some ways we can be like the Pharisees, and think like the Pharisees, when it comes to this? What irrelevant "outside" realities do we find ourselves judging in others, or in the Christian life?
 - b. Sometimes it's not just how we judge others, but how we judge ourselves. Have you ever judged yourself based on outside factors, rather than the inside reality? What are examples of this?
 - c. The fact is, there is a problem, but it's in the heart. Jesus clarifies what this can look like in verses 20-23. Many of us have used denial as the way to deal with this. We may have indicators in our life that something isn't right (much like the "blinking blue light" illustration), but we ignore it and deny the issue. Have you ever been through a time in life where you had a "blinking blue light"? An indicator that was on, that you ignored for a time? How did it present itself? Why was denial an easy option? What led you to finally deal with that problem?
2. **"Don't do what everyone tells you or expects you to do – do what God tells you to do".**
 - a. What are some of the man-made expectations placed on us when it comes to following and knowing Jesus? What have you personally heard or experienced?
 - b. How do you seek out the truth? How do you seek out what God wants? What are practical steps that can be taken?

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3. God changes the heart, and it begins with His grace and forgiveness. Because of Jesus' work on the cross we are given "positional holiness". What an amazing gift! Placing our faith in Jesus means we are given this gift and as God looks upon us, no matter the depth of our issues, He sees only the righteousness and purity of Jesus. As we enjoy this grace, we are also called to pursue holiness more and more each day.
 - a. How has your understanding of this motivated you to pursue holiness daily?
 - b. What "heart" issues has God led you through and healed you of in your life?
 - c. If you have walked through heart issues, inside issues, and have received healing from them... what would you say to someone who is in the thick of an issue right now? What encouragement would you give as you look back on your own journey?
4. What is an area of the heart that you hope and pray God meets you in, this year?

PRAYER

- Pray for each other in any area of the heart that was shared
- Take time to stop, be silent, and listen. God may want to speak into an area in your life, or address a heart issue. Write down anything He says, and if you feel led, share what He said.
- Ask Him to help you. To empower, convict, lead, heal and teach.

NEXT STEP

- Matt mentioned the "Set Free Retreat" coming up this spring. It is a 2 day retreat based on everything we have talked about this past weekend.
- Held in the foyer of our Bearspaw site and led by your Pastors, **Set Free** will help you receive healing and experience freedom. Its purpose is to help each person experience the wholeness that Jesus makes available to us.

Date: **March 27 & 28** (Friday evening 6-9 pm, Saturday 9 am-6 pm)
Cost: **\$59** / Participant (meals and refreshments included)
- Make this retreat a small group event. Register and book it in your schedules. Registration can be done by emailing office@rockpointe.ca