Mark 7

“*Heartfelt”*

**Scripture:** Mark 7:1-23

**Memory Verse:** *“…unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

John 3:3

**Lesson Focus:** Only God can change our heart to belong to Him.

**Activities and Craft:** Coloring Page, Work Sheet

**Craft for 1st and 2nd Graders:** Jesus has given me a new Heart door hanger

**Introduction:** “The Heart Game” Cut out the hearts at the end of this lesson. On the back of the hearts write the following words on the back of each heart. Throw the hearts on the floor and invite the same number of kids to come to the front of the room and pick a heart. Tell them not to look at the back of the heart. One by one have them turn over their heart and read (or have them read) the word on the back of the card. Ask the kids if this is what they want in their heart after you read each word.

Words: evil thoughts; murder, stealing, pride, lying; wanting what other have, wanting to do bad things, to hate God, not care about being good, love, worship, kindness, humility, servant, love God, God’s Word.

Tell them that today Jesus is going to focus on what is in our hearts.

**Bible Study:**

**Mark 7:1-13; *“****Phairsee Rules”*

*√* Who are the Pharisees and scribes?

*√* What did they see the disciples doing? (eating without washing their hands)

*√* Why did they care?

1. The Pharisees had many rules.
2. They built these rules around the laws of God.
3. They kept building rules and adding more rules until many of the rules were ridiculous. The “Mishnah” was a collection of all of the Jewish oral laws made at the end of the second century. The Jews felt like these rules would help the people follow God’s Holy Word. But they got carried away and the “rules” replaced a relationship with God. Some of the silly rules where:
4. that on the Sabbath you could no look in a mirror – because you might see something wrong with your face or hair and want to fix it and that would be considered work.
5. On the Sabbath you could not “carry” a handkerchief (or Kleenex) around but you could wear it around your neck.
6. One of the biggest concerns of the “Mishnah” was cleanliness. These rules came from the “ritual” washings that priests were to do before they served God. Even though the cleansing of hands was a rule given by God for priests (Exodus30:19 and 40:12) – all Jews began to practice this 200 years before Jesus came.

Mark says in Chapter 7, that the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way. When they come from the marketplace they wash their hands before they eat. And they had many other rules about washing after touching cups, dishes, etc. Basically they were washing their hands all of the time.

*√* Is there anything wrong with washing your hands before you eat? (No, we

should all do this to get the germs off of our hands before we put food in our mouth.)

But to the Jewish religious rulers this was more than getting rid of germs. They believed that you had to follow these rules to make you “clean” or spiritual on the inside. In other words – rules had to be followed to be close to God. This made the religious rulers feels very “self-righteous.” That means that they felt like they were better than everyone else, that they were closer to God!

*√* What did the Pharisees ask Jesus? (Why do your disciples eat bread without

washing their hands and not follow our traditions?)

*√* How does Jesus answer?

1. First He calls them “hypocrites.” (A hypocrite is a phony – some who pretends to be something that they are not.)
2. Then Jesus quotes Isaiah the prophet. This verse basically says that all of their “religion” was fake. Their hearts did not belong to God!
3. Jesus tells them that their “legalism” is just rules taught by men. This would really upset the rulers because they had made these oral traditions equal with Scripture
4. Jesus gives them an example of the 5th commandment “to honor your father and mother.” But they would say that all that they had belonged to God so they would not help their aging parents. (They used the oral traditions to rationalize away not doing what God’s word says.)

**Mark 7:14-23;** *“God’s Heart Rule”*

Jesus calls all those around Him to come and listen.

Jesus makes 2 main points:

1. A man is defiled or “unclean” by what comes out of his heart.

(that means that his words and actions show what his heart believes and his relationship with God.)

1. A man is not defiles or “unclean” by what comes from the outside.

(This means that you are not made “spiritual” by things that you do.)

These statements of Jesus are very radical. This would upset the Jewish rulers and the Jews because they believed that they had to do all of these things to be spiritual. But Jesus is changing what real “spirituality” is.

This thinking was so radical that they disciples did not understand it and ask Jesus to explain.

Here’s what Jesus says:

1. The food we eat does not make us unclean or spiritual. Food is taken care of by the stomach.
2. What comes out of a man in his behavior shows his true heart.

From the heart comes; (Teachers, I am leaving out adultery and fornications….I think the kids will get the gist of what Christ is saying without going into those things…)

1. All evil thoughts (thinking evil things within yourself)
2. Murders (taking someone’s life)
3. Thefts (taking what is not yours)
4. Covetousness (wanting what you do not have or greed)
5. Wickedness (a heart that is ready to do evil to any one at any time)
6. Deceit (to lie to people)
7. Lewdness (to be openly immoral)
8. Evil eye (envy – watches another’s possessions to take them)
9. Blasphemy (to speak against God and man)
10. Pride (is thinking that you are more important than anyone else – selfishness)
11. Foolishness (someone who does not care about being good or being spiritual)

This list is very sad. This is how God sees us apart from His saving grace. Man is sinful. Man’s sin comes from within him…he is born with it.

Jeremiah 17:9, tells us “the heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it.”

Romans 3:23 tell us, “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”*

**Illustration:** Take in a dirty cup. Tell the kids that you washed this cup on the outside. Ask them if the cup looks nice and clean. Now show the kids the inside of the cup. Now ask them if the cup is nice and clean. Tell them that this is what Jesus is talking about. We can look good from the outside – but it is what is on the inside that matters.

What Jesus is saying is that our problem is on the inside not the outside. Now, there are things that we should do to keep us safe and healthy (we take care of our bodies.) The Jewish leaders thought religions was to be focused on what they did, how they acted, and the rules that they followed.

Here’s the truth: “There is no power on earth that can make a human heart good.

Only the Gospel can do that! Jesus says in John 3:3, “*I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.”* Everyone needs a new heart. That only comes when we believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and that He died for our sins.

**Conclusion:** Jesus is not telling us that we do not need to obey the laws of the land or our parents – or that we should not obey what God says in His Word. The Bible tells us those things very clearly. But Jesus is saying that everyone needs a new heart to know God and to love God. We cannot “do things” to make us spiritual.

**Example:**

1. Going to church does not make us Spiritual – it’s how our heart listens and wants to change when we are at church that matters.
2. Reading our Bible does not make us Spiritual – it when we let the Spirit of God change us when we read the Word and when we do what it says.
3. Wearing the right clothes does not make us spiritual.
4. How we look on the outside does not make us spiritual.
5. Giving our money does not make us spiritual.

Your challenge this week is to make sure that your heart is right with God. Make sure that you have accepted Him as your personal Savior. Then stop and think about your day each day. What came out of you –

* Were you angry or joy filled
* Were your words naughty or kind
* Did you treat people with respect or did you make fun of people
* Did you obey your parents or do your own thing

All of these things tell us the condition of our heart. Let’s ask God to change us!

“*Unless one is born again He cannot see the Kingdom of God.”* John 3:3