MARK

Mark 7:1-7
Wk 27
Pastor Chip

General:

- Why do you think we're often more concerned with how things appear on the outside than with what's happening beneath the surface (just like how we keep the junk drawer hidden while making sure the rest of our home looks presentable)?
- The Pharisees were committed to studying Scripture and living faithfully before God. How can a genuine desire to honor God gradually turn into a preoccupation with religious rules, appearances, or the behavior of others?
- The scribes were scholars and teachers who devoted themselves to understanding God's Word. How is it possible to know Scripture extremely well and yet misunderstand the heart of God? What can we learn from their example?
- What's the difference between practicing something that helps us honor God and using that practice to measure someone else's faithfulness?
- Pastor Chip emphasized the danger of elevating the “tradition of the elders” to the level of God's Word. How can we discern whether something we practice as Christians is a biblical command, a helpful tradition, or simply a personal preference?
- How do we balance respecting and learning from spiritual leaders with our responsibility to examine what they teach against Scripture?
- In verse 6, Jesus calls the Pharisees hypocrites. What are some ways our outward expressions of faith can look convincing while our hearts remain distant from God?
- Question about having right lips but hearts that are far from God
- Jesus says, “In vain do they worship me.” What makes worship genuine rather than simply religious activity? How can someone participate in worship without actually surrendering their heart to God?

Take Home 1: Why do we gather around Jesus? (Mk. 7:1)

- When you gather with other believers, what do you focus on? What Jesus wants to teach you or what you think others are doing right or wrong?
- What is the difference between regularly participating in Christian activities and actually allowing Jesus to transform your life? How can you recognize that difference in yourself?
- Where might there be a disconnect between the faith you publicly express and the way you privately live?
- Have you ever found yourself more focused on evaluating a sermon, worship service, or church experience than allowing God's Word to examine and challenge you? What might that reveal about your posture toward Jesus?

Take Home 2: We cannot let our religious expectations become more important than people (Mk. 7:2,5)

- What's the difference between expecting people to conform to a particular Christian culture and helping them experience genuine transformation through Jesus?
- Where might you be expecting others to follow a standard that comes more from your personal preferences or traditions than from Scripture?
- How can we uphold biblical holiness without creating unnecessary barriers that make broken or struggling people feel they must clean themselves up before coming to Jesus?
- Who are you most likely to judge based on their appearance, behavior, background, or spiritual maturity? How might seeing that person through the eyes of Jesus change the way you respond to them?

Take Home 3: Can we look in the mirror of God's Word and honestly ask if we might be so right in our own minds, but be so wrong in our relationship to Jesus? (Mk. 7:6b)

- Why is it often easier to recognize someone else's spiritual blind spots than to acknowledge our own? Where might that tendency be showing up in your life?
- How can our desire to be right (especially about biblical or theological matters) sometimes keep us from being humble, gracious, or receptive to correction?
- If you allowed Jesus to examine the parts of your life that others rarely see, what might He reveal that needs to be surrendered, confronted, or changed?