

Cleaned by Jesus

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[0 : 00] Hello. Hello. You are confined. And what's happened to the audience, but one is on page one of those.

Thank you. I have seen someone speaking to the Lord, but it comes to the truth to them, gather their own faces, and so on this project, the hands are held by the eyes and washed.

The Pharisees know the name is not used, unless they get their hands and they are not used to wash them, or it moves to the position of the elders. When the people are on the side, they acknowledge unless they are washed, and they are served many other conditions, such as the washing of cups, dishes and headsets.

The Pharisees are the specific law and the purpose. Why do they decide to employ the tradition of the elders, instead of shooting their fingers and un-community?

Here is why Isaiah is right to move up the side by the hypocrite, as it is absolutely written. These people are in the English, but they are fast-runners.

[1 : 15] They worship me, saying, that the teachings are the rules for all by men. You have left all the demands of God, and all the love of the teachings to men.

And he said to them, you have a fine way to step inside the demands of God, and all the truth is that they are doing the teachings. So Moses said, follow your father and your mother. From anyone who has been to his father and mother, what he put to death?

For he say, and he demands that his father and mother, whatever else he might otherwise receive from me, for thee. That is, I gave his approach to God. And he know not that that is what he takes from his father only.

He says, that he knows how the word of God is sufficient, and he will understand. He did many things like that. Again, he gave his whole life to him and said, listen to me, everyone, and go to standards.

Nothing is hard to learn from the nation, but the only things he did. Rather, it is what comes out of the nation, the nation, the nation, the nation.

[2 : 22] After he left the tribe, and then he left his house, he described the man from the land of the house. For you don't show me up. Don't you see that nothing is about any commandment yet but to make more peace.

For a seven village of the heart, but it is with stone, and then I will follow. The same thing is to bear all these peace. He went on, What comes out of the man, is what makes more peace.

Both from the things I have been taught, from evil thoughts, sexual and evil answers, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, confusion, envy, slander, haric, and her body.

All these men will come to the inside, and make a man come to the inside. And the other people who are not able to keep Jesus out of their churches, as they have said, they have taken away from the big times in the big cities.

In fact, their plans to do away with Jesus are coming along nicely. Keep your finger in chapter 7, and this is the fact that chapter 3, Mark's Gospel.

- [3 : 38] Here we see Jesus as just being to the synagogue of the local church, and he has been challenging the teaching and the tradition of the Pharisees, the religious people.
- So much so, chapter 3, verse 6, that the Pharisees went out and began to stop with the colonial river of the religious people.
- How they might kill Jesus. So there is this stop, there is this attempt to be now for religious people to get the greatest of Jesus.
- Now in chapter 7, it is reached the point where news has been to the flowering, and where it went to the church, that Jesus is still attacking huge giants.
- The last report has mentioned a figure of at least 5,000 people. I've been told them all. So a meeting has been called, it seems, at HQ back in Jerusalem, and it's decided to send their very best lawyers and professors to come down and sort Jesus out.
- [4 : 48] So chapter 7, verse 1. The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law, who had come from Jerusalem, so they've traveled a distance of about 80 miles. That's a long way when you haven't got a bicycle or a car.
- They've walked this way, so important they want to get to Jesus and sort him out. They gather around Jesus, and they saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were unclean, that is, unwashed.
- This is their big chance. Disciples with unwashed hands. Look at verse 5. So the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, they asked Jesus, Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders, instead of eating their food with unclean hands?
- Now we've got to get this clear right at the very beginning, otherwise we're not going to make sense of what this passage is all about. Their concern was not so much about a hygiene code.
- This was their holiness code. Their concern wasn't so much about washing their hands to get rid of bacteria. It was a religious duty that they performed in the hope that they could be made clean before God.
- [6 : 15] Spiritually clean. Now at one level the Pharisees, the religious people are right, because we all need to be made clean before God. But the problem isn't about being clean, but how we are made clean.
- How we are made clean. That's the critical issue. And it's so important to Jesus that he will publicly confront and challenge the religious leaders, because their teachings and their tradition are in conflict in conflict with who Jesus is, what he says, and what he has come to do.
- So he must expose them for who they are. And this is what he says about them. Look at verse 6. He says, Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites.
- In other words, they're people who put on a mask. They're people who just act out their faith. It's not a real faith. As it is written, these people honour me with their lips.
- They talk about Jesus. They talk about God. But their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain. Their teachings are but rules taught by men.
- [7 : 29] So in strong language, Jesus is warning us about trying to make ourselves clean before God by simple rules and tradition.
- So first, why do we want to be clean? Well, this issue is of critical importance because all of us want to be clean.
- I don't think there's one person here this morning, myself included, who doesn't long to have their past erased and wiped clean.
- Because we all carry around with us hidden secrets, things that bring with it feelings of guilt and shame that we wish we could somehow wash away, never to bother us again.

That's why all the major religions of the world have some practice of ritual washing. Think of the Hindus who go bathing in the river Ganges.

[8 : 34] They do it in their desire to be pure before their gods. The Muslims, they'll wash their hands before going to prayer or into the mosque in their pursuit of acceptance.

Christian religions will baptise with water in the hope of securing eternal life. And it's the same with the Jewish religion. Look at verse 3, chapter 7.

The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing holding to the tradition of the elders. You see, their tradition taught that the act of washing kept yourself pure before God and acceptable before God.

You see, you could become impure by the kinds of food that you ate. The certain furniture that you touched and certain people that you met or bumped into.

They could all make you unclean. So, verse 4, when they came from the marketplace, when they've been down to Dunn's stores or down to Tesco's, well, they couldn't eat unless they washed because you wouldn't know what food you touched when you'd been shopping.

[9 : 53] And you didn't know who you'd been bumping into. You could have been bumping into somebody from a different race. And that would have made you unclean. And they observed many other traditions, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and kettles.

Anything that could hold something had to be cleaned in a ceremonial way. They went to extreme lengths to experience being clean.

But you see, it's not just religious people who long to be clean. Even irreligious people want to be clean because we've all got our own traditions to wash away, as it were, our bad experiences and our dark secrets.

Some people try to wash it away through substance abuse. Others, by immersing themselves into work and hobbies. Others put on a mask by dressing well and keeping their homes in pristine condition.

It's a facade of cleanliness which mirrors their inner longing to be clean. Why is it that some people, after some physical or sexual experience, that they regret have a shower or a bath?

[11 : 11] Because they feel dirty and they want to be clean. They want to feel clean. And we all have the desire to be clean inwardly, to be free from guilt and shame, free from past secrets, free from our condemning thoughts.

And that's why Jesus is making such an issue of this, because he wants to make it crystal clear to us all the dangers of trying to make ourselves inwardly clean, by religion and by tradition and all these little rituals that we build up.

He says, rather than actually clean you, it's going to break you and destroy you. So how do we try to get clean?

Well, look at verse 8. He says, You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.

And he said to them, You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions. Now we'll see in a minute that the word of God, the gospel, is essential for being made clean.

[12 : 25] But like the Pharisees, we turn away from the word of Christ and we turn to the traditions of our own. And we do this in two ways.

We see it in verses 8 and 9. First, we reject the word of God. We put it to one side. Look at verse 8. He says, You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men.

Rather than accept the gospel, rather than accept what God has to say, we consciously reject the gospel. We put it to one side. We say, It's not for us. I don't want it.

I don't need it. I can get clean another way. So we reject the word of God. And then second, we replace the word of God.

Verse 9. And he said to them, You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions. So not only do we reject the gospel, we replace it with something else entirely.

[13 : 34] We come up with another way. There's another means that we can get clean. We invent our own traditions to clean us. So in effect what he's saying, we create our own gospel, a man-made gospel, a set of traditions and religious practices which have this veneer of cleanliness, which gives the outward appearance that all is good, that we're all okay, while cleverly hiding the truth that is deep inside us.

Let me give two examples of this. First, our outward respectability. These are ways we create our own little gospels and religious practices.

First, our outward respectability. We create this tradition of places we can't go to and people that we can't be with. In an attempt to keep clean, we stay clear of those places and those kinds of people for fear that if we were with them we would somehow become unclean.

We would kind of be contaminated or something. So we want to be seen, we're quite happy to be seen at the prayer meeting, but we wouldn't want to be seen in the pub.

We want to be seen with respectable Christians, the ones that don't mess up, the ones that don't fail. But we don't want to be with the other kind.

[15 : 08] Now, if we don't adhere to these rules taught by men, well then we're considered unclean. So there's this outward respectability that we want to put out.

Second, there's this outward conformity. Where we create a tradition of certain beliefs and a certain kind of behaviour that we must adhere to.

And in a desire to maintain cleanliness, we must have a certain kind of theology. And we must adhere to certain practices according to your denomination.

So we love to be seen with our new ESV, but, hmm, I wouldn't read from an NIV. We want to be known as Reformed, but don't call me a charismatic.

Oh, I want to be a Baptist and do those things, but we're not going to mix with those kinds of people over there. Now, if we don't observe these man-made traditions, because that's what they are, we are considered unclean.

[16 : 19] We're not fitting in. We don't fit the mould. And these two things of outward respectability, outward conformity, they give this lovely veneer of cleanliness, an outward appearance that everything is good.

My lifestyle is so pure. Just look at me. And my theology is just so sound. Listen to me speak. But inside lurks a heart that is so unclean.

Look at verse 13. Thus, he says, you nullify the Word of God. You reject it.

You reject the Word of God by your tradition that you have handed down, and you do many things like that.

You see, it's so easy, and look at me here, it's so easy just to drop God's Word, put it to one side, and lift up in its place the teachings and the traditions of men.

[17 : 32] In an attempt to get clean and keep clean, we not only reject God's Word, we replace it with something else entirely. We push the Gospel of Jesus Christ to one side and say, I can get clean another way, and I'm going to create my own Gospel, my own tradition, my own way.

Well, somebody doesn't agree up there anyway. So what is it that makes us really unclean? Well, the real danger of tradition is that it stops us getting to the heart of the problem.

And the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart. Look at verse 15. He says, It says, Nothing outside a person can make him unclean by going into him.

Rather, it is what comes out of a person that makes him unclean. So the problem, he is saying, is not external. The problem is internal.

It's our hearts. And the heart isn't just this organ inside our bodies just for pumping blood all around our body. It's the Bible's way of describing who we are as people, our true self.

[19 : 02] Our heart explains our inner character. So he goes on, verse 20. What comes out of a person is what makes him unclean.

For from within, out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, the nasty things we think about others. Sexual immorality, online porn, theft, misusing the resources that God gives us.

Murder, hating other people. Adultery, the way we even look at the opposite sex.

Greed, never content and wanting more. Malice, immoral behaviour. Deceit, telling those porkies and lies.

Lewdness, pursuing pleasure through lust. Envy, wanting what other people have.

[20 : 25] Slander, tearing people down in our conversations to each other. Arrogance, always thinking that I'm right.

And folly, living life without reference to God. All these evils come from inside and make a person unclean.

Now, Jesus couldn't be clearer. He's saying it's not people and places that make you unclean. It's not beliefs and behaviours that make you unclean.

It's our rotten hearts. It's our rotten hearts. The source of all of our actions and our attitudes, they come from the inside. He says our hearts are like a pool of pollution and everything that flows out of our lives, every thought, every action, every attitude, it begins to contaminate and begins to affect.

And we can all look so clean. I mean, we all look pretty clean this morning, don't we? We've all had our showers and new clothes on.

[21 : 43] We can all give this appearance of being clean in the way we talk to one another. And we'll go into this coming week acting very clean.

We're all good at it. But deep inside, we are all terribly unclean. The heaven is still not too clean. Now Jesus is not just exposing our hearts.

He's not kind of tearing us open to leave us feeling more guilty and more ashamed. This is not a kind of like beat you up session where you're going to be kicked around the place because you feel bad enough already and now I'm just going to be kicked around and punched even more because I'm just so awful.

Yet we know we're awful, but He shows us our rotten hearts simply for this reason, to expose how hopeless and pathetic it is to think that teachings and traditions of people and religion can make you clean.

To think that an outward observance can deal with our sinful heart is like you or me going to the doctor with chronic blocked arteries and saying to your doctor, I need help, and him saying, okay, I've got a plan for you, go home and have a lovely hot bath and you'll be all right.

[23 : 00] It's absolutely stupid, isn't it? Let's think about it. When did going to a certain place or not being with certain people free you from sexual immorality?

It can't. When did surrounding yourself with good Christians break the habit of greed and deceit?

It can't happen. When did reading a particular Bible translation break your struggle with lust? Daft, isn't it?

When did holding a certain theology deal with your arrogance? It just doesn't work. Because it's an issue of the inside.

And that's why Jesus is so opposed to rules taught by men. They offer this veneer of cleanliness, this lovely outside facade. They cover up the external while avoiding the internal.

[24 : 03] And traditions that are handed down by churches and by preachers, and that's why you need to pay careful attention to whoever is speaking up here to make sure they're not teaching tradition.

But that they're teaching the gospel. Because traditions handed down by churches will not clean you. They will ultimately kill you and break you. Which leads us on to ask the question, who can make us clean?

You see, the purpose of Jesus' teaching, and he always does it so well, is kind of to drive us to this point, to the bottom, simply to drive us back towards Jesus.

Because he is our only hope. Look at what he says in verse 14. Again, Jesus called the crowd to him and said, Listen to me, everyone, and understand this.

In verses 8 and 9, Jesus was accusing the Pharisees of turning away from God's teaching to their own teaching.

[25 : 14] Now Jesus is coming in and it seems as if he's adding his own. He says, Now listen to me. But what he's really saying is, by listening to me, you're listening to God's words.

If you listen to my words, if you hear me, my words are going to clean you from the inside out. How do we know that?

Well, go back to chapter 1, verse 40. You might remember this encounter of Jesus with a man with leprosy. A leprosy, the skin disease, was one of those things that the Pharisees considered unclean.

And if you touched the person, you became unclean. And you had to go through a week of ceremonial washing to make yourself right again. So this man with leprosy, we're in verse 40 of chapter 1.

A man with leprosy came to Jesus and begged him on his knees. If you are willing, you can make me clean. Filled with compassion, Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man.

[26 : 22] An act of solidarity. And then listen to his words. I am willing, he said. Be clean.

And immediately the leprosy left him and he was cured. Now I know you're thinking that's an external cleaning. He had leprosy and physically he's been healed.

But I think this is a picture of the internal cleaning that comes from Jesus through his words, through the gospel, to our lives.

Let me give you just one cross reference. Go to Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5.

Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 6. Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. Ephesians chapter 5. So, husbands, listen up. But we'll see the purpose of this. So, husbands, love your wives.

[27 : 49] How do husbands love their wives? Well, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. So, we're to follow the example of Christ who loved the church.

How did Jesus love the church? Well, look at the rest of verse 6. cleansing her, that's the church, the people, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, through the gospel and to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless.

You see, it's the gospel word. It's the words of Jesus that are heard, believed and applied to our lives that are going to clean us.

Jesus, by his word, will wash away every stain, every blemish and make us clean and beautiful. And I think that's what Jesus is getting at in Mark's gospel.

He's saying, will you stop making up your own silly traditions? Stop teaching stupid rules. The only way to be clean, the only way to wash yourself is in the gospel.

[29 : 12] Picture this wonderful scene. You might be on a tropical island, but just picture yourself there. To jump into that pool, to bathe in the pool of God's mercy.

That's what he's telling us to do. To stand underneath the waterfall of God's grace, let it fall upon you and cover you and wash you. And to swim and immerse yourself in Christ.

This is what he's calling us to do, to come to him. Now it all just seems so easy, doesn't it? Simply to come to Jesus and let his words clean us.

So why is it then that we always seem to turn away from it and do our own thing? Well, here's the reason that I think anyway.

To experience the deep cleansing work of Jesus means that we must show him our heart. And to show Jesus our heart, to let him see us as we are, is incredibly painful.

[30 : 18] Because he begins to show us what our hearts are like. And as he kind of pulls away the layers of skin and he exposes us to who we are, we begin to see things that we don't want to see.

We begin to see things we don't like. And we discover that the fault is no longer out there with other people. But the fault is actually deep inside of me.

And it's terribly painful. And our pride resists it and we fight against it and we battle against it on a daily basis. But you know what?

Letting Jesus have access to our hearts is not for the purpose that he kind of pulls open the layers, opens our hearts and stamps on us to crush us and say, what a naughty person you've been.

He exposes our hearts not to crush us, but to clean us. And that cleaning starts and it continues as we come to the cross.

[31 : 26] And the invitation for us this morning is to come as we are, whether you are a believer or whether you are an unbeliever, with all of our mess, it doesn't make any difference at all.

We come as we are with all of our mess, all of our uncleanness. And we come to Jesus at the cross and we see Jesus crushed for us.

He's taken our uncleanness from us onto himself. He's crushed for us so that we can be made clean. His death on the cross and all the imagery of the blood, the crown of thorns, the blood that flows from his hands, from his feet, the sword that was thrust into his side, the blood that flows by faith, that is what washes away every stain and every blemish, making us pure and beautiful.

This is the gospel. This is the word of Jesus which cleans us and changes us on a daily basis.

We don't just start with the cross and offer up a little confession of, I'm sorry, please clean me and then that's it. This is a daily practice, a daily routine, a daily means by which we come and know that fresh cleaning every day of bathing in the pool of God's mercy, standing under the waterfall of his grace and immersing yourself in the gospel of Christ.

[33 : 08] Wonderfully clean and wonderfully changed to have a heart like him. I want you all, please, to turn to Psalm 51.

We're not going to sing this morning. We could try and sing Psalm 51. Most of them were sung, but we'd all have a different tune and it wouldn't be very nice.

So, we're just going to read Psalm 51 together, verses 1 to 12. And this is a song of confession to God.

So, for all of us this morning, and you know your past, you know your week, you know what's gone on, you know all of those things, and more importantly, Jesus knows he sees our hearts.

And the beauty of opening ourselves to him is not to be crushed, but it's to be cleaned, to be made new, to feel and to experience his grace in our lives.

[34 : 19] Let me just point out one thing before we do read it. Look at verse 7. It says, Cleanse me with hyssop. Okay, we haven't got any hyssop branches lying around the place, so what's hyssop?

Well, hyssop was the branch, remember, in the Old Testament, the time of Passover, where they dipped the leaves of the branch into the blood of the lamb, and they plastered it on their houses, and the angel would pass over, and they would be kept safe.

But the imagery is of blood, the protection, the safety of blood. And it's pointing forward, I think, to Christ, to his death on the cross. So when we're reading verse 7, think forward to Jesus on the cross, his death for us.

So let's read together from verse 1 to 12. We'll read it slowly. Just follow me as we read. And then we'll leave a time of just reflection at the end in quietness.

And then I'll close in prayer. Let's read from verse 1. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love, according to your great compassion, blot out my transgression, wash away all my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

[35 : 43] For I know my transgression, and my sin is always before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned, and done what is evil in your sight, so that you are proved right when you speak, and justified when you judge.

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner part. You teach me wisdom in the inmost place.

Cleanse me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Let me hear joy and gladness.

Let the bones you have crushed rejoice. Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquity. Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence, or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.

[36 : 56] let's just take a moment's quietness to reflect and talk to God.