

Good morning, church family.

Take your Bibles and turn with me, if you will, to Mark chapter seven. Mark chapter seven. We're gonna be in verse 14 through 23 today. Mark chapter seven, verses 14 through 23. It's the second part of our small miniseries in Mark, entitled The Heart of the Matter. The Heart of the Matter. Mark chapter 7, verses 14 through 23. Once you've found the passage, if you would, stand with me in honor of the one who gave us this word as we read the text together this morning. It reads in Mark chapter 7, verses

14 through 23, And after he called the crowd to him again, he began saying to them, Listen to me, all of you, and understand. There is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him. But the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. And if anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. And when he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples were asking him about the parable. And he said to them, Are you lacking understanding in this way as well? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and then goes into the sewer? Thus he declared, All foods clean. And he was saying, that which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man. This is the word of the Lord.

Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for the opportunity that we have together as a body. We pray for those of our church family that are not here, that you would heal them or whatever the case may be in their absence, but I pray that you will bring them back to fellowship with us soon. I pray, Father, for safety for all those who may be traveling, and Lord, I pray that our hearts would be attuned to the passage today, to the message that you have for us, that your spirit would impact each of us with the lessons that are to be learned from this text, and that we would understand the difference between law and gospel as we observe this today. I pray, Lord, for me that you would remove any hindrances, any nerves, any lazy tongue or whatever the case may be that could impact the message or hinder the delivery of your word. And I pray that you'd be glorified, that you'd remove me from the equation, and it would simply be your message impacting your people. We love you and praise you and thank you for the grace that has brought us here together. In your holy name I pray. Amen. You can be seated. All right, so last week and then

of course following up this week, we're looking at the heart of the matter. Last week we looked at Mark chapter

7 in the first 13 verses and we talked about the heart of the matter as the Pharisees came and challenged Jesus with man's traditions. And we saw very quickly the judgment that would be pronounced on those who add to the Word of God, to His law, or take away from it for that matter. And we talked about the heart of the matter being that there's something the matter with the heart. And this week it's a similar theme in this passage. And so that's why we have two sermons in this mini series. And today Jesus is going to expand on what he told the Pharisees. If you recall in verse 13, he was still talking to the Pharisees as he wrapped up last week. Now he's turned to the crowd. that was there as well. If you recall in the timeline of where we're at, he's in Capernaum and he's ministering to the crowds and there was tons of people being brought and he was healing and people were touching his garments. And now here he is with the Pharisees and the crowd, of course, is still there. And so he puts the Pharisees in their place, shows them the clear error of their ways, and now he's turning to the crowd to give them more specific teaching and of course we're going to see that being laid out in a parable first and then the expansion of the parable to those whom he shows it to. Now, as we're thinking through the lesson today, I want us to remember a couple different things. First of all, that there is still the difference that we're seeing in Mark between the outer crowd and the inner crowd. We've seen that theme throughout Mark over and over again. We see that he takes the disciples, the inner crowd, and he takes them to reveal his teaching to them, reveals what the parables mean, and then we have the crowd that he leaves on the outside. Just remember that theme as we're looking through here. But the most important thing that we're going to look at, and you're going to hear me say it a lot today, is that the heart of the matter is there's something the matter with the heart. The heart of the matter is that there's something the matter with the heart. in that what God looks at is not the outward actions of people, but where the motives for those actions come from. And that's the important thing that God looks at. So as we dig in here, we're gonna spend the majority of our time, there's only two points today, but we're gonna spend the majority of our time in the second point, and we'll get into that in just a moment. But the first point is accusation to parable. So he's made the accusation, last week we talked about the accusation that came from the Pharisees. The Pharisees accused him of not being a law follower, that his disciples were eating with unwashed hands, and that will come up again as we're talking today. And now, then he went to the accusation reversed, and he reversed the accusation and says, no, not only are you wrong in your interpretation, wrong in how you're applying it, you don't have the authority to change what God has said. This is what it means, and he

laid out his authority. And now he's moving from the accusation to a parable in verses 14 through 16. And so what he does first is he gathers the crowd to him. He turns his attention away from the Pharisees. He's put them in their place.

And now the crowd is going to hear some more teachings. So he's shifting gears from an apologetic or a defense of what is the truth

to a teaching moment for the crowd. And the call here is extremely emphatic in the original language, listen to me, all of you, and understand it's a very emphatic, it's only used, this phrase is only used nine times in Mark, and each time it introduces a solemn teaching. And he wants them to pay a special attention to this particular teaching. So here he is again, bringing this up with this particular word. And as he takes on this role of a teacher now, he's going to do his normal teaching. If you guys remember back in

earlier in Mark, Jesus said he was going to explain everything in parables. So you guys remember that? He's going to teach in parables. So as he comes about to teach again, he's going to give them a small parable in verse 15. It says, there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him, but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile him. So when we think about what he's

saying compared to what he was talking about with the Pharisees, There's a phrase that popped in my head and it was humorous to me. It's not about what you chew, it's about what you do, okay? It's not about what you put in

your mouth and chew and take in that defiles you, it's about what you do. And so with this parable here,

he says simply, there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him, but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. So he's essentially reversing the script on the Pharisees. They said, hey, because you're eating and your hands are defiled, you're making the food defiled. And if you remember back in Mark, earlier in Mark chapter 7, he talks about bowls, because the Pharisees were very particular.

If any kind of container for food was not flat, it had some sort of a concave to it that could be used as a bowl, it was extremely important that the the bowl be washed a specific way, even though that wasn't the command of the law. And so he's saying it's not the bowls that need to be washed. It's not what the bowl contains that needs to be clean. It's what comes out of the human that needs to be clean. It's not what you put your food into, it's what comes out of the man. And he does this in other places as well. As a matter of fact, in the Gospel of Matthew, if you want to write this passage down, I'll read it for you, but it's Matthew 23, 25 through 28, he uses a very similar analogy to put the Pharisees back in their place there as well. He says, woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, for you clean the outside of the

cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, "for you are like whitewashed tombs, "which on the outside appear beautiful, "but inside they are full of dead men's bones "and all uncleanness. "In this way you also outwardly appear righteous to men, "but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness." So he's using a similar analogy there, using cups to try to teach them something. It's not about the outside of the cup, it's about the inside. And he's using the cup as the analogy. It's not about what you do on the outside of your body, it's about what's coming from the inside. And there's nothing you can take inside of yourself that will defile you, you're already defiled. And he's going to go on to explain this to the disciples in just a moment. It's not about what you're bringing into you that makes you unclean. You are already unclean within yourself. Now, one quick note I want to make here on this parable, this parable I've heard. can be taken out of context to say that there's nothing that a man can put inside himself that will defile himself. Let's make sure and remember, context is king. In this particular argument, this parable, he's talking about food coming into a man that cannot defile him. This is not a free pass for drug use or abuse of substances or eating as much as you want to. This is not that kind of an idea, okay? I've seen this passage ripped out of context, kicking and screaming, saying, hey, you can put anything you want in your body and it doesn't hurt you. That's not what it's saying. Okay, what he is saying in context, because context is king, is that food, in and of itself, does not defile a man. Now, of course, as we talked last week, there's a difference in the Torah where we talked about unclean animals that you could eat and could not eat, and this will come up again in a few moments, and we'll address that specifically. So if your mind is already going there, we'll see here where Mark makes a point about that. But as this script has been flipped on the Pharisees, I read a quote this week, uncleanness and defilements are matters of intention and the heart, not the violation of cultic rituals and formalities. Now that word cultic there doesn't mean like standing in the woods with fire and robes and that kind of a cult. It's talking about cultic practices. The word cultic practices is a pretty benign term. It just means ritualistic practices that you practice every time that you do something. We have a cultic-like practice of reciting the Nicene Creed every week. That's a very benign term, okay? And so in mind here, in understanding of what's going on here, we have to think to ourselves as a good

illustration of our context. So in that context, they're talking about, hey, you can eat without washing your hands. It's about what's inside your heart. What that means is in our context today, there are things that you can do that are expressly commanded by God that done with the wrong intention are defiled. And some examples of that are sharing the gospel. Do you know you can share the gospel with the wrong motive? Now God may take that gospel and still do what He is willing to do, what is by His grace going to happen, but you could absolutely share the gospel with someone with the intention of, oh, I know someone from church is in the grocery store, and if they see me sharing the gospel, I know that I'll get a pat on the back on Sunday, or maybe it'll get back to the pastors that I shared the gospel. Do you see how that can very quickly unwind into something that you're doing for God that God has commanded that is defiled by your intentions, or perhaps disappointing your children? The Scripture is pretty clear that we're supposed to discipline our children, correct? Discipline them, raise them up in the fear. Can you discipline your children in an ungodly way with bad motive? Of course. You can lose your temper very quickly. Guilty of that this week myself, in fact. You can very quickly lose your temper and discipline your children in an ungodly manner. You're doing the action that God has commanded but with a bad heart. And that's what makes it defiled. Or another example is feeding the poor. And unfortunately, social media has garnered us a lot of people who do charity work for the wrong motive. So in our idea of doing things that God has commanded, it could be teaching a class, preaching a sermon, even tithing and giving of your time to the church can all be done in a defiled manner because of your heart. And that's the point of what Christ is trying to teach the crowd. He's telling them, don't listen to the Pharisees. I've already shown you where they've added on to the text. They've already added on to the law of God. They've elevated the law of man to the level of the law of God. In fact, he even tells them they've set aside the law of God. They don't even care about the law of God anymore. They've set it aside. That's not what this is about anymore. This is about doing what man says as opposed to what God says. And he tells the crowd, no, no, It's not about following these ritualistic things so that you don't become defiled by their definition. It's about what proceeds out of the man that is the issue. Now, as we come to the end of this first point, verse 16, some of your Bibles may have it in parentheses or logged off here as a separate little verse. The early Masoretic texts, the early texts that we have don't have this verse in it. Verse 16, the earliest copies of Mark that we have don't have that verse in it. It was likely a clerical addition later, because Jesus, oftentimes when He taught and preached parables, He used that phrase in other passages,

and it was likely a clerical addition later on. It doesn't change the meaning of the text or anything like that. I just wanted to point out that there are later Manuscripts that do have it and very early ones that don't. But the main thing that we need to take away from this first point is a point of application that the so what is what is the motivation for what you do? What is the motivation for what you do? What is the motivation for what you don't do? The actions you can do all day long and if you don't do it with the right motivation, you might as well not do them at all. Because what comes out cleanliness and uncleanness, defilement and not being defiled is a matter of the condition of the heart. Now this is gonna be very important and when we get into point number two here in just a moment, but I want us to understand the condition of the heart is the heart of the matter. What is the condition of your heart? Keep that in the back of your mind. Point number two, parable to discipleship. This is what we'll spend the majority of our time together. So now he went from an accusation to a parable, and now he's moving from a parable to discipleship. So he's moving in with the inner circle. He's going to disciple them, giving them the meaning of discipleship. the text. Now I've mentioned heart a lot already this morning, but as the word heart is going to come up in our text as well again, I want to make sure that we're all on the same page as far as what heart means in this text. And then I'll read it together here. The heart in the scriptures is not the muscle in the left and part of your chest that pumps blood to all of your extremities. That's not what it's referencing. The word heart in scripture is the seat of the emotion, the internal center of who you are. It's where your personality resides, it's where your will resides, it's the internal part of what makes you, you. And so we have to understand that that is the seat of where a human is, that is the center of who a human is. It is not the organ that pumps the blood, it is who you are as a human being. So with that in mind, let's read verses 17 through 23 again. And when he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples were asking him about the parable. And he said to them, are you lacking understanding in this way as well? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him? Because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach and goes to the sewer. Thus he declared all foods clean. And he was saying, that which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man. So now as he proceeds to enter a house, and that's the same idea we've seen throughout Mark, the theme that we'll see throughout the rest of the gospel, is that

when Jesus wants to teach his inner circle, he takes them into a house or completely separate from the crowds. He wants no distractions. He wants no interference. When he is going to disciple his chosen people, the disciples that he chose and called, he takes them alone by themselves. So as we see the inner circle separating out, we're now seeing them asking the question, which is another sign of evidence of their hard heart. If you remember back in verse six, the term that was used for disciples were, they still had a hard heart. And this is showing itself again in how they ask. In verse 17, his disciples were asking him about the parable. They still don't understand. He's just given them an explanation. He's performed all these miracles for the disciples. In fact, he walked on water and revealed himself as Yahweh. You guys remember that? He revealed himself as Yahweh in three specific ways, condescended into the boat to them, and they still don't get it. They still don't get it. Now, before you cast dispersion upon them and lift up your nose, and surely I would have gotten it by then, please remember, Please remember, no one understands who Christ is unless Christ tells them who he is. Unless there's an impact on the person's heart, no one understands who God is and who Christ is. You can see all the miracles in the world, but you're never going to understand who he is until he reveals himself specifically to you. God is sovereign over who gets to understand and who does not. And so as we see their hardness of their heart being witnessed here, we have to remember what Jesus quoted up in verse six, how we referenced Isaiah. Do you guys remember in Isaiah chapter six, the accusation that God makes against Israel? That their heart is far from me. that their heart is far from me. Do you guys see where the centrality of the problem is for both the disciples and the Pharisees? They have the same problem. Their heart is far from God. The heart of the matter is there's something the matter with the heart. We have to understand where the root cause of the problem is. It's not about what you do on the outside. It's about where your heart is. And so the tone of Jesus's question is probably the tone that I have with my kids too often when I've explained something 17 times. Are you still not getting this? That's the tone of the original language. Are you still not getting this? Don't you understand? How can you not see this yet? Even Jesus himself calls them on this. You still don't understand. How are you still not understanding? Is this something that I have to explain to you again? And then, as all good teachers do, in my opinion, uses a little bit of sarcasm. Right? He goes on to sarcastically explain how the human body works. What comes into a man goes into the stomach and then into the sewer. And all of us have experienced that. And so to make his point, he

tells them, this is how the physical body works. And as we think through His explanation here, it kind of makes you smile even today. It makes me smile as I was studying it this week. For him to take these grown men and explain to them how human digestion works, they must have all went, okay, I see what you're doing there. Okay, right? And you see him give this explanation and then he adds on. Mark adds on, excuse me, a point here, thus he declared all foods clean. Now this is one of the few times we've seen this. Mark actually interjects himself into the text. Because if you remember, Mark is writing from the recount of Peter. Mark is listening to Peter. He's literally at his feet, writing down Peter's explanation of everything that Christ did. He wasn't part of what happened here. But Mark, who's Mark writing to? Someone remind me. Oh, we've been here a long time, guys. Who's Mark writing to? The Romans, right? The Gentiles. He's writing this gospel specifically for the Gentiles, the Romans. And so Mark, knowing who he's writing to, is writing a little footnote here, an author's note, thus he declared all foods clean. Now this is a big deal. This is a big deal because later on the first church council ever called in Acts chapter 15 was about the food loss between Jews and Gentiles. Galatians is written... in detail about the food laws. Romans has entire passages, entire chapters addressing food laws. This was a big deal. And so Mark is inserting here so his Gentile readers know, because this is several decades after Christ, or several years after Christ at the very least. This is where Jesus proclaimed all foods as clean. So Jesus himself being the authority over the law is now saying, it's not even about what kinds of foods you eat. So he's already argued with the Pharisees because they're saying it's how you eat your food. And they're taking for granted that the Torah taught you have clean and unclean animals. Now he's projecting and teaching and explaining and transcending the original law that all foods are clean. There is no longer unclean and clean foods. And so his authority is seen once again. And as we continue looking at Jesus being shown in Mark over and over and over again, he is telling them over and over and over again, this is the one who has the authority. The same thing he did in Mark chapter two for the Sabbath. You guys remember in Mark chapter two? What do you do with the Sabbath? Verse 27 and 28. And Jesus was saying to them, the Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath. Consequently, the son of man is Lord even of the Sabbath. So he's already teaching them. He's transcending the law. He's not abrogating it, which means to change it or to cut it off. He's fulfilling the law and transcending it to teach the heart of the law. Because at the center of everything, The heart of the matter is that



there's something that matter with the heart. I told you we'd be using the word heart a lot today. And so as we see him building this case over and over again, he's going to get into the meat of what he's trying to teach them. And this is the mind boggling part of this text. And it's absolutely beautiful.

We're going to bring in Romans in just a minute. I want us to understand who Christ is. Now, when we think through this bringing about of the new covenant, and the old covenant, Jesus showing the old covenants and it's lack of being able to truly bring man to perfection. He's going to come in here and show us the true root, the true heart of man and what proceeds from it. So in verse 20, he picks back up again and says, as he's teaching the disciples, that which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within out of the heart of men proceed the evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, adulteries, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. So Jesus has just laid accusations against humanity. Do you realize that? The God of the universe has now come into his disciples and accused all of humanity for the things that break God's law. Everything on that list that he just read is a direct violation of the law of God. Everything on that list. So Jesus has in effect, after putting the Pharisees in their place saying, you don't even understand the law. All you do is add to the law, your own manmade regulations and stipulations. He is now saying the reality is that humanity, he's not talking about just the disciples here, the heart of men. He's talking about humanity as a whole is completely defiled. Not because of what's outside of them, but because of what's inside of them. Now some of these things, I know already in your mind you might be thinking, some of these things are done outside the person, yes, but it starts on the inside. What's the very first thing? Evil thoughts. And so as he's laid this accusation out, he has, by means of this list of sins, accused man of not being able to fulfill the law. Remember, the overriding theme of these two passages is the law. That's the overriding theme, right? The Pharisees came in with a charge, you're a lawbreaker. You're not teaching your disciples to follow the law. You're not following the tradition of the elders. And Jesus reverses that and says, you are the true lawbreakers. And he uses the fifth commandment from honoring your father and your mother to explain that. And now he's saying, it's not only them that have broken the law, all men have broken the law. All men have a defiled heart.

In fact, Jeremiah 17, 9, I'm sure many of us know this one, the heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick. Who can know it? Jesus is establishing that there

is something the matter with the heart. This is a catalog of evil that comes from the inside of every single man. And there's a doctrine that we have for that is called the doctrine of depravity. the total depravity of man. Now, I want to make sure and explain this to you. There's been accusations made against the doctrine of depravity that that just means that every single person is as bad as they possibly can be. Now, let me ask you, in your own life experience, are you as bad as you possibly can be? Everyone should go, nope. You don't want to know what's going on in my head half the time, right? So the doctrine of depravity is not about being as bad as you possibly can be. The doctrine of depravity is that every part of a human being is depraved. It's been impacted by sin. It is short of the glory of God. That every possible part of a human being, as Jesus is pointing out, the heart, the center of man especially, is depraved. There is a evil that resides in man. And this of course comes from the fall, Genesis chapter three. You can write that down and read it again. I encourage you once in a while to read chapter three of Genesis to remind yourself just how bad you need Christ. There's not a whole lot else in scripture. There's a lot in scripture, I shouldn't say that. There's a very good place in Genesis three to see exactly why you need Christ in that fall and that curse. But when we think here of the accusation that Jesus is making against all humanity, you begin to get hopeless. And if you're not hopeless yet, hang on with me, we're gonna look at this list a little bit more. Because what I want you to do is identify yourself. Even if you're a believer, I want you to identify yourself with the Pharisees and the rest of humanity. Identify yourself with your need for a savior. Because when you can identify yourself with your need of a savior, and you're a believer, you go to a deeper level of praise and glory of Jesus Christ. When once in a while you understand who you are without him, or who you would be without him, even though you still may sin, when you understand that by his grace, you don't sin worse, all you can do is fall to your knees and go, Jesus, thank you for making me something that I wasn't before. it's important that we have that reminder. So as we look at this list in verse 21, I want us to really think through the meanings of some of these, because sometimes you can look at these and go, well, I haven't stolen anything. I haven't murdered anyone. I haven't committed actual adultery. I don't really covet that much. There's lots of things that we can go in here as believers and go, yeah, I'm doing pretty good. I mean, I'm doing pretty good with this list. Let's talk about the list a little bit more. So there's 12 different things.

The first six are plural and are physical actions. So the first six of them are plural and physical actions. And again, I want to reiterate that the beginning of this list starts with evil thoughts. There's an interesting view from some in Christendom. I've had discussions with people that think that you cannot sin inside your own head. That is absolutely against scripture. I've been ridiculed, in fact, mocked, because, oh, careful, Josh, you don't want to have any evil thoughts today. Those sinful thoughts, you can send inside your head. You better be careful. Oh, my brother, you don't want to know what's in my head. I thank God for his grace, because that's where all my sins began, is right there. And Jesus is reiterating that here. Evil thoughts, these sinful evil thoughts is where these actions spawn from. So the first one is sexual immoralities or pornea is the Greek word. This is a all-encompassing word for everything that is sex outside of marriage. Any kind of activity of sexual nature, whether it be pornography, adultery, fornication, prostitution, homosexuality, the list could go on and on and on. But this is an overarching term that is the action of anything that is sex outside the covenant of marriage. The next few are fairly self-explanatory. Thefts, murders, adultery. coveting, being jealous, wishing that you had something of someone else's. And then the last one is wickedness in those first six. Now wickedness, the word here means malice or an evil intent. So actions done with an evil intent. Anybody know a malicious person that just everything they do has an evil motivation behind it. You guys know what I'm talking about? Like everything they do at work, everything they do with their family, there's just, there's just constant, just what their motivation is to just poke at people, right? Just can I trip someone up today? Or just those, just those wicked, just evil intentions. The next six terms are singular and denote evil attitudes, evil attitudes. So this is, this is just the general attitude of who you are. The first one is deceit, an attitude of being deceptive. Sensuality. Now, a lot of folks put sensuality as simply sexual in nature. Sensuality, by definition, although does and can encompass sexuality, is actually a much broader term that is an entire focus on the senses itself. Sensuality. And so this is the idea of giving yourself physical pleasure by whatever means that happens to come about. Could be gluttony. Could be, again, sexual sin. It's a lack of self-control. Could be drug abuse. Could be substance abuse. Could be many different things that become a sensual desire. Anything that would not align with the word of God. Then we have envy, an attitude

of jealousy. Slander is next, the attitude of tearing others down with our words or actions. Pride, an attitude of superiority over others or a high view of oneself. Foolishness, this attitude of evil or wickedness, a general attitude of evil intent against others is what that original word would mean. So let's think about these 12

things. Can you identify that with yourself?

I can, so I'm not ashamed. I can. There may be a couple of the physical things, I haven't murdered anyone, but I can certainly say that I've hated people. And we know that Christ taught us the true intent of that law, right? Theft, I haven't stolen anything that I can recall unless I was a little kid and did it and don't remember, Do you cheat on your taxes? Right, that's theft. What about theft from work? They don't need this thing of post-it notes. It's not yours, don't take it home. Time theft, right? You're getting paid for not working. So when we think through this list, and I'm not gonna go through every one of them and make you raise your hand or put it down, that's not my goal. I think each one of us, if we truly search our hearts, and I pray that the Spirit is showing you that this is who you are, in you, your natural self. Can everybody at least shake their head with that, yes? Everybody understands this is who man is in his natural self, completely depraved, breaking God's law at every turn, knowing that this is who you are before God saves you. Now let me ask you something.

When we look at the text, these two texts together, and Jesus coming to this list, Do you think the traditions of men can fix that? You remember what Jesus pushed back against the Pharisees on? You bring up the traditions of men to make yourself righteous. Can the traditions of men fix that? Think about our world today. Do the laws of men keep these things at bay? They do to an extent, and I'll give you that, you know, some people don't do as, get as bad as they can be because they don't want to go to prison, right? But they're more afraid of the consequences than they are anything else. But let's think about that. Can the traditions of the elders, the Mishnah, you guys remember the Mishnah from last week, can the Mishnah fix those issues? Now here, how about this one?

Can the law of God fix those issues? Can the law of God fix that within the heart of man? No. It cannot. The law of God cannot fix the depraved heart, nor was it intended to. In Genesis chapter three, when we saw the heart fall, we saw Adam fall and the sin entered man's heart and entered the world and corrupted nature and corrupted who man is for the rest of his generations, we saw something happen to man that cannot be fixed with our actions of any kind. The law can't fix it. The instructions

of man can't fix it. You cannot pull yourself up by your bootstraps. There's no little island of goodness that you can latch onto and hope that you can one day do something good to redeem yourself. There isn't a giant scale in the sky waiting for you to die to put your good works over your bad works. There is nothing here in the law of God or the teachings of man that can fix the list that Christ just gave. There's nothing that can on this earth. And Paul explains this. Turn over with me, if you will, to Romans chapter two. I wanna bring in one other example, one other analogy from scripture that explains this to us. Because Paul goes into much detail in Romans. We're not gonna exegete all of Romans two, we don't have that much time. But I do wanna show you a couple of key points in Romans chapter two, that where Paul makes the same argument in more detail. using covenantal language. So as you're turning there, overall, the chapter is about the judgment of God. That's the overall theme of the chapter. And in it, Paul explains why that judgment is righteous. And he's just come off of chapter one, explaining how bad humanity is. But there's some key points here that's gonna help us understand the heart of the matter. Look at verse five, if you will, first. Romans chapter two and verse five first. But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God. So the heart is the center of the issue here. Paul is reiterating that. There's a stubborn and unrepentant heart. And he's writing to both Jews and Gentiles here, speaking, basically arguing from both sides or against both sides. And then he goes on through the chapter to compare the Gentiles and talk about them first, the Gentiles who don't have the law of God. They don't have the Torah. They are a law unto themselves and are still guilty of judgment. Even though they don't have the law, they're still guilty of it. But then in verse 26 through 29, he comes in and he says something that is so impactful. I wanted us to look at it together. Romans chapter 2, 26 through 29, it reads, So to clarify our terms, uncircumcised man is Gentiles, circumcised are Jews. So he's comparing Jews and Gentiles. So he's essentially said so far, if a Gentile observes the righteous requirements of the law, will not his circumcision be counted as circumcision? Then he goes on to say, and he who is physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, will he not judge you who through the letter of the law and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh, but he is a Jew who is one inwardly. And circumcision is that which is of the heart by the spirit, not by the letter, and his praise is not from men, but from God. So think about what Paul is explaining here. This is a deeper dive, another analogy of what Jesus has just explained to the disciples. The

heart is the issue. Jews relied on what? Their position before God as the sons of Abraham. And they could say, I am physically circumcised, therefore I'm a son of Abraham, therefore I am righteous before God. But knowing that they could not keep the Torah in their sinful hearts, they came up with the Mishnah and added on countless number of laws that were physically able for them to be able to accomplish so that they could have the appearance of righteousness, setting aside the true law of God as too difficult for them to live up to. Because the true intent of the law is to show man that he cannot be God. The true intent of the law is to show man that he is imperfect. And so what the Jews had done was they added on themselves, under the law, physical things that they could pat themselves on the back for, fences around the law, as they called them, that they could accomplish that would make them feel better about themselves. And, oh look, I'm righteous. I tithe 10% of my dill this month. Oh look, I'm parading through the marketplace to give my 10th donation, 10% donation to God, everyone look at how holy I am. Or the Pharisee that was in the synagogue that's looked up to heaven and said, thank you God for not making me like this unrighteous sinner over here. Those are all examples that Christ uses to show the Pharisees the futile attempt that they have to make themselves righteous by law. to use the law opposite of its intent. And so Paul tells them, the true circumcision is one that is circumcised in the heart. In other words, the one who is righteous before God is the one whose heart has been circumcised or changed, not one who is circumcised or physically changed on the outside. Do you guys see the connection? Is it making sense? Yes? Okay. So when we think through the description that we have of what Jesus has now accused all of mankind of having, we see Paul explaining it in a deeper way. I want us to now think through the application of this. The law has a job to do. It does. The law is perfect and it is a gracious gift. The law has a job. Do you know what that one law or that one job is for the law? is to show you and I that we are absolutely unrighteous and hopeless before a holy God. That is the only job of the law. That's it. In fact, Hebrews 7, we talked about it at Sunday school this morning, Hebrews 7 says, the law does not make one perfect. God in his own scriptures, that He gave us through the Holy Spirit tells us that the very law He gave us is not to make you and I perfect. It's one sole and only job is to show you and I that we are absolutely unrighteous. And so when we think to ourselves, oh my goodness, look at this list, look at this list, I've done the things on this list. And we know from other passages

that if you break one law of God, you're guilty of them all. And so even if you can say, hey, I'm pretty good, I'm a 20 percenter, I've already only broke 20% of the things that Jesus just talked about, you've broken 100% of them. And so the job of the law is to bring you and I, every person that God has ordained to come to him, to bring us to a point that we go, I need a savior. There's nothing I can do. Look at this list. Look at this list. There's nothing I can do. What am I gonna do? God is holy and I am not. How am I ever going to make this happen? What in the world am I going to do? And is to crush us so that we become hopeless, so that the only hope we see is Jesus Christ. That's it. That's the whole job of the law, is to break you, is to break me, is to drive us to our knees in absolute hopeless despair, so that our only place that we can see is the small flicker of light through the darkness that Paul talks about, where we see Christ. And we look to his cross. and the Spirit comes and changes our hearts, and where the heart of the matter is something the matter with the heart now becomes, okay, God comes down and condescends to us and removes that dead heart of stone, removes the sinful, depraved, wretched person that we are at the center of our being, and He gives us a heart of flesh. And He graciously gives that by His own grace for His own glory and has nothing to do with you or I. Because the law has already showed us we have nothing left. We have nothing to hope for. But God, but God, Ephesians chapter two, saved you and He redeemed you. And we have been studying the life of the one who came to give himself so that your heart could be replaced. So that the heart of the matter becomes, I have a new heart. The heart of the matter is no longer there's something that matter with the heart, I have a new one. Is it perfect? No. If you read this list as a believer today and you go, I still see some of those things in my life, that's okay. Because Christ doesn't just give us a new heart and then leave us alone, does he? Christ gives us His Spirit. John 17, I'm gonna send you a helper that will teach you all the things in the law so that it becomes a beautiful encouragement to you instead of a hopeless crushing thing. That's what Psalm 119 is all about. The longest chapter in the Bible is about the beauty of the law that we rejoice as believers in it because God gave it to us to show us that we needed a savior. And then how beautiful it becomes as we grow in Christ and are changed more and more. And we have progressive sanctification where he grows us in the image of Christ and shaves off and sands and smooths out and gives us these things that make us more like him. Now I want to keep from swinging

the pendulum too far. You guys know I'm a big advocate of balance and making sure we don't run away with ourselves. I am not advocating for Christian antinomianism. Antinomianism means we reject the law completely as useless. We live under grace now. Yes, you're right, we do live under grace. We are not made righteous by the law, but that doesn't mean we live as we want to so that grace may abound. Paul addresses that for us in that same book. But the difference is, is now we are not looking to the law trying to live in it so that we can be made righteous and make it to heaven. We are now looking at the law as a great and glorious way to glorify the one who graciously changed us. It's a completely different view of what the law is. So I'm not advocating for antinomianism. But what I want us to do, my favorite passage, if anybody ever wants to know, Josh's favorite passage, Matthew 22, 36 through 40. The Pharisees had come to him and said, what's the greatest commandment in the law? And Jesus says to them, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength. And you shall love your neighbor as yourself. And on these two things hinge all of the commandments, all the law and the prophets. Everything else hangs on those two things. Now think with me. Would that direction from Jesus terrify you before you were given a new heart? I hope that it would. But let me ask you with your new heart when you view that commandment, I hope it encourages you. Because now the heart has changed. Now we have the ability by God's grace to love him. We have the ability by God's grace to love our neighbors. We have the ability by God's grace to look to the law and go, Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. And so now with Jesus being united in Him, being one with Him, we are now seen as righteous. Think about that. We are now seen as righteous. That should cause everyone to go, amen. Right? We are now seen as righteous. We no longer have the weight of the law on us. Christ fulfilled that and gave us and imputed that righteousness to us. We no longer have to worry about being unrighteous. Yes, we need to live according to the commands of scripture. Don't hear me say that. But when it comes to a justification, we no longer have to worry about it. When he said it is finished, it was done and paid for. That's it. And we rest in that. It's been said that Mark profiles Jesus as the one who, in contrast to the oral tradition, is the true revealer of God, for Jesus can produce the inner transformation that the law requires, but cannot affect. I'm gonna read that again. Mark profiles Jesus as the one who, in contrast to the oral tradition, so what the Pharisees brought in, is the true revealer of God. For Jesus can produce the inner transformation that the law requires, but cannot affect. So we think about applying this



to ourselves. It is not about the deed itself, but it's what the intent is behind the deed. Remember that. It is not about the deed itself, it's about the intent behind the deed. And now, please understand, you can swing that pendulum too far too. I unfortunately have been involved in situations where someone has said, God wants me to get a divorce from my spouse because he wants me to be happy. Because I have an inner peace about, that's not what that means. Okay, so please understand. Don't swing the pendulum too far. It's not about the deed itself, it is about the intent behind the deed. And I want you to think about your inability to fulfill the law before Christ came and gave you that new heart. Because when you think about where you came from before, you're so overwhelmed with gratitude and praise and worship that it impacts literally how you live every single day. If you truly understand where you are before, where you are now becomes so much brighter. I compare that to a diamond. Anybody ever went diamond shopping? Every married man in here should raise their hand. When a diamond, when someone at a jewelry store shows you a diamond and they put it on a glass case, just the glass, you're like, okay, that's pretty, but it's not, I mean, it's not overwhelming. But then what they do is they get this black velvet mat or cloth and they lay it down on the counter and they put the diamond on that. and suddenly it lights up. It's so much more brilliant and beautiful than it ever has been before. That's what the grace of God looks against the background of our sin. It's so much more beautiful when we look at where we came from. We remember who we were before God changed us. His grace is overwhelmingly beautiful. And remember, the point of the law was to bring us to a place where we can exclaim, I need a savior. And he steps in for those whom he's called, who he gives the grace to understand that they need a savior, and he gives them that new heart. And as you move forward, please remember this week, this list, this talk about the law, I don't want you to see this list as something that you can achieve before glory. Sometimes when you look at a list of things that in scripture that are a list of things not to do, it becomes extremely overwhelming even as a believer. Because there's no way I can fix my pride. Right? Anybody else with me on that? There's no way I can fix. I know me and I know my own sinful heart. I will never 100% get rid of my pride before glory. There's no possible way. So what do you do? You look to Christ. Because He's already atoned for the sin of that pride. The sin that you're going to commit later today, I guarantee every single person in here is going to commit a sin today. The sin that you're going to commit later today, that I'll commit later today, has already been atoned for by Christ on the cross. It doesn't mean we

frivolously live however we want to. But my point in all of this application here is don't look at this as a list to beat you down. Look at this as a list of what God saved you from and continue to look to Him for strength to live counter to the way you used to live, counter to this list. This is not a sermon about, oh, Josh preached this list. I have to go out and check mark these every single day because all that does is drive us into Pharisaism. Oh, it doesn't drive us into moralism, that we can give ourselves a list of things that fall under each one of these headings that we just mark off that we don't do or do so that we can feel better about ourselves. That's exactly what this entire passage has been talking against, is doing that. Look to Christ. So in conclusion, these two passages, this week and last week, mark the single longest conflict recorded in Mark. This is kind of a big turning point in the gospel so far. Because this solidifies the animosity that the Pharisees and religious leaders from Jerusalem have for Christ. And they are going to up their game, if you will, in attempting to put Him to death. So this is a big turning point. But it's also a big turning point, it's been said, because Mark labors to clarify that the essential purpose of the Torah, and hence the foundation of morality, as a matter of inward purity, motive, and intent, rather than of external compliance to ritual and custom. He's pushing back against hundreds of years of Jewish belief. Hence the animosity from the Pharisees. But as we go through this week, As we go through this week, if you hear nothing else today, hear me when I say that we must rest in the fact that we have a new heart. We must rest in that. Resting in what Christ has done is essential to the Christian faith. And that means gathering with the believers. That means coming to the table to partake in communion. That means understanding that by grace, through Christ, we have the Spirit indwelling us, and that he is ever producing a people and a church who are more and more like the bridegroom. He promised he would do that. He promised he would. Rest in what he promised. He covenanted by his blood that he would never forsake us, never leave us, and make us whom he promised to make us. for his own glory and our good. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, thank you so much for the opportunity to come together today. To see the intent of the law, as you accused all of humanity in the text we saw of breaking your perfect law. But thank you for the grace of the law that crushes us in our sin, that shows us who we are, that we need a savior. And thank you for your gracious gift of a new heart in us. that the heart of the matter would no longer be something wrong with the heart, because you've given us that new center of who we are. And I pray, Lord, that each one of us would rest in what you've done, rest in your righteousness, not our own, rest in your completed fulfillment of the law, not our ability to try to live to some sort of manmade

idea of what it looks like to be righteous. Lord, help us to look to you and what you've taught and what you've done. We love you and praise you in your holy name I pray, amen.