**The Gospel of Mark**

**Witness to the Son of God #5**

**The Parables of the Gospel – Part 3**

**The Parable of Clean and Unclean –** [**Mark 7:14-23**](http://www.usccb.org/bible/mark7%3A14)

**What Defiles a Person?**

***14*** *And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand:****15****There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.*

***17****And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable.****18****And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him,****19****since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled? (Thus he declared all foods clean.)*

***20****And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.****21****For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,****22****coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, ignorance.* ***23****All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”*

**OT Background: Leviticus 11:1-43**

*11 And the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying to them, 2 “Speak to the people of Israel, saying, These are the living things that you may eat among all the animals that are on the earth.3 Whatever parts the hoof and is cloven-footed and chews the cud, among the animals, you may eat. 4 Nevertheless, among those that chew the cud or part the hoof, you shall not eat these: The camel, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you.5 And the rock badger, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you.6 And the hare, because it chews the cud but does not part the hoof, is unclean to you. 7 And the pig, because it parts the hoof and is cloven-footed but does not chew the cud, is unclean to you. 8 You shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall not touch their carcasses; they are unclean to you.*

*9 “These you may eat, of all that are in the waters. Everything in the waters that has fins and scales, whether in the seas or in the rivers, you may eat. 10 But anything in the seas or the rivers that does not have fins and scales, of the swarming creatures in the waters and of the living creatures that are in the waters, is detestable to you. 11 You shall regard them as detestable; you shall not eat any of their flesh, and you shall detest their carcasses. 12 Everything in the waters that does not have fins and scales is detestable to you.*

***13****“And these you shall detest among the birds they shall not be eaten; they are detestable: the eagle the bearded vulture, the black vulture,****14****the kite, the falcon of any kind,****15****every raven of any kind,****16****the ostrich, the nighthawk, the sea gull, the hawk of any kind,****17****the little owl, the cormorant, the short-eared owl,****18****the barn owl, the tawny owl, the carrion vulture,* ***19****the stork, the heron of any kind, the hoopoe, and the bat.*

***20****“All winged insects that go on all fours are detestable to you.****21****Yet among the winged insects that go on all fours you may eat those that have jointed legs above their feet, with which to hop on the ground.****22****Of them you may eat: the locust of any kind, the bald locust of any kind, the cricket of any kind, and the grasshopper of any kind.****23****But all other winged insects that have four feet are detestable to you.*

***24****“And by these you shall become unclean. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening,****25****and whoever carries any part of their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.****26****Every animal that parts the hoof but is not cloven-footed or does not chew the cud is unclean to you. Everyone who touches them shall be unclean.****27****And all that walk on their paws, among the animals that go on all fours, are unclean to you. Whoever touches their carcass shall be unclean until the evening,****28****and he who carries their carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening; they are unclean to you.*

***29****“And these are unclean to you among the swarming things that swarm on the ground: the mole rat, the mouse, the great lizard of any kind,****30****the gecko, the monitor lizard, the lizard, the sand lizard, and the chameleon.****31****These are unclean to you among all that swarm. Whoever touches them when they are dead shall be unclean until the evening.****32****And anything on which any of them falls when they are dead shall be unclean, whether it is an article of wood or a garment or a skin or a sack, any article that is used for any purpose. It must be put into water, and it shall be unclean until the evening; then it shall be clean.****33****And if any of them falls into any earthenware vessel, all that is in it shall be unclean, and you shall break it.****34****Any food in it that could be eaten, on which water comes, shall be unclean. And all drink that could be drunk from every such vessel shall be unclean.****35****And everything on which any part of their carcass falls shall be unclean. Whether oven or stove, it shall be broken in pieces. They are unclean and shall remain unclean for you.****36****Nevertheless, a spring or a cistern holding water shall be clean, but whoever touches a carcass in them shall be unclean.****37****And if any part of their carcass falls upon any seed grain that is to be sown, it is clean,****38****but if water is put on the seed and any part of their carcass falls on it, it is unclean to you.*

***39****“And if any animal which you may eat dies, whoever touches its carcass shall be unclean until the evening,****40****and whoever eats of its carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening. And whoever carries the carcass shall wash his clothes and be unclean until the evening.*

***41****“Every swarming thing that swarms on the ground is detestable; it shall not be eaten.* ***42****Whatever goes on its belly, and whatever goes on all fours, or whatever has many feet, any swarming thing that swarms on the ground, you shall not eat, for they are detestable.****43****You shall not make yourselves detestable with any swarming thing that swarms, and you shall not defile yourselves with them, and become unclean through them.****44****For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy. You shall not defile yourselves with any swarming thing that crawls on the ground.****45****For I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God. You shall therefore be holy, for I am holy.”*

***46****This is the law about beast and bird and every living creature that moves through the waters and every creature that swarms on the ground,****47****to make a distinction between the unclean and the clean and between the living creature that may be eaten and the living creature that may not be eaten.*

**Notes and Studies**

1. When confronted by the Pharisees and scribes regarding eating with unclean hands...

 a. Jesus described the danger of focusing on the exterior - ([Mk 7:1-13](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.1-13))

 b. How the exterior can become a prison of the soul

2. Jesus then used the occasion to teach concerning true defilement.

 a. First to the multitude ([Mk 7:14-16](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.14-16))

 b. Then privately to His disciples ([Mk 7:17-23](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.17-23)) [Having the benefit of both His public and private teaching in Mark's gospel, we can learn "The Source Of True Defilement."

From Jesus remarks to both the multitude and His disciples we learn that the food for dietary restrictions does not lead to the inner freedom.

3. Why there were such restrictions?

a. Were designed to keep Israel separate from the other nations. Food has invisible force in the social life.

b. Food is at the center of feasts

c. It is the one of the most important items which we share and this creates better relationships

d. From the Creation, man (and animals) may have been vegetarian ([Gen 1:29-30](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Gen%201.29-30)) and there was no “dietary” law observed by the Patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

e. After the Flood, God gave animals as food, but not their blood ([Gen 9:3-4](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Gen%209.3-4%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank))

4. With the Law of Moses, Israelites were restricted in their diet ([Lev 11:1-47](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Lev%2011.1-47))

**Jesus and his teaching on freedom from the Law**

1. Jesus has declared all foods clean ([Mark 7:14-19](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.14-19))

 a. To the multitude, Jesus hints at the source of true defilement ([Mark 7:14-16](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.14-16))

 b. To His disciples, Jesus explains His parable (Mark 7:17-19)

2. Did Jesus observe the Law?

a. There was no law in the beginning prior to Moses. Jesus points to this fact when he was quoting the story of creation. God has created humanity and did impose a law on humanity regarding marriage and divorce (Matt 19:3-5).

b. To return to what was in the beginning became an essential part of the Gospel. So, to get away from the laws of dietary appears in the vision that when Peter saw the heavens opened and something like a great sheet descending, being let down by its four corners upon the earth. In it were all kinds of animals and reptiles and birds of the air.  And there came a voice to him: “*Rise, Peter; kill and eat.*” But Peter said, “*By no means, Lord; for I have never eaten anything that is common or unclean.*” And the voice came to him again a second time, “*What God has made clean, do not call common.”* This happened three times, and the thing was taken up at once to heaven. (Acts 10:11-16)

c. Paul later taught that all food is acceptable, but with a warning that what was offered to idols could be avoided ([1 Titus 4:1-3](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Ti%204.1-3))

d. Nothing is to be refused when received with thanksgiving and prayer ([1Ti 4:4-5](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Ti%204.4-5))

e. In the Council of the Apostles, food offering to idols, blood, and strangled animals should be avoided ([Acts 15:28-29](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ac%2015.28-29); [21:25](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ac%2021.25))

f. The fear of idolatry continued to be a problem for any contact with what connected with idols ([1 Corinthians 10:19-23](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%2010.19-23); [Romans 2:14](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%202.14), [20](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Re%202.20))

g. Paul warned not to make certain foods become a stumbling block to the weak that still fear idols ([Romans 14:14-21](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ro%2014.14-21); [1 Corinthians 8:8-13](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Co%208.8-13))

**The heart is a source of true defilement**

1. In Mark [7:20-23](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mk%207.20-23) “heart” is a common Hebrew word for the whole inner human life.
2. Evil thoughts can defile.
3. Evil thoughts are a general term generated in a heart united with our will to produce evil words and actions.
4. Adulteries, fornications and illicit sexual relations by a married person, which Jesus said could occur in the heart ([Mt 5:27-28](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Mt%205.27-28)) prompted by lust ([1Th 4:3-5](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Th%204.3-5)).

1. Murder is the bitter fruit of pride and anger taking life intentionally, which is connected to hate in the heart ([1 John 3:15](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/1Jn%203.15))
2. Theft, which is stealing, and its root is extreme self-love.
3. Covetousness is the most obvious manifestation of selfishness
4. Greediness which makes one an idolater ([Eph 5:5](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Ep%205.5%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank); [Col 3:5](http://biblia.com/bible/nkjv/Col%203.5))
5. Wickedness is evil acts done with malice.
6. Pride is the mother of all sins

**Notes from Philemon**

**- Greed and Idolatry**

George: “Why did Paul call greediness an idolater?”

Philemon: “These kinds of people are those who have extended their being to encompass everything they desire. Each item functions like a god, for they can no longer live without what they desire.”

**- Existence without God**

George: “What is pride?

Philemon: “It is human existence without God. It is the [false] Law of Good which we select without having evil, for all things and all actions are good, no desire or will to see if our actions are in fact good.

“Pride does not allow criticism or even questions; for the common attitude of a proud person is: “Who are you to question me?”

**- Pure Heart**

George: “Who has a pure heart?”

Philemon: “Your question ‘Who has a pure heart?’ has been part of my contemplation for years. I have asked the Lord to illuminate it for me, for I can’t say that I have a pure heart. “I asked the learned monks about the meaning of the word ‘pure’ and the summary of their answers is that something that is pure is like the unmixed liquid, or the metal that has no other metal added to it to make an alloy; things that are not compound.

“I dwelled on these descriptions for days asking if my heart does not have mixed seeds of good and evil. And if I have two hearts, one that speaks to people and other hidden one, then that makes my heart an “alloy”. It was a hard walk but I have asked my Jesus to help me.

“This is what the Lord told me in the most brief words: ‘Philemon a pure heart is the heart that has no mixed love’ and no more. My Jesus used few words so that I may examine myself and freely come to Him. Mixed love is that heart that loves its own mixture and this mixture is the cause of the lack of purity for we lead a divided life.

The Two Great Commandments are about one undivided love.

***Pope’s Notes***

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