

4.5.C(28).Rebuke Defiled Hearts. Mark 7:14-23

Read Mark 7:14-22.

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, foolishness. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they **defile** a **person.**” 7:20-23

Background:

After revealing to the Pharisees that their lives were *hypocritical* because they honored God with their lips, but the spiritual reality of their hearts was a mismatch. Their hearts were more loyal to human tradition. As a result, they voided the Word of God to *establish* their own human traditions.

When Jesus continues to point out the shortcomings of these Pharisees, he starts by further analyzing their fixation with external practices. He makes a **distinction** between the seen world of physical and material reality, which has no ability to impact the realm of the spirit. And, the spiritual reality, which is the realm of the heart, so it can be defiled.

So, he says: “Nothing outside a person going into him can defile him. Jesus says this to show

that true defilement and uncleanness occurs in the spiritual realm of the heart, which has the power to corrupt one's whole life.



The main Jesus speaks against this practice of the Pharisees to focus on dirty hands defiling people, developing an entire religious system of “defilement” and “holiness,” is that it is an expression of what we might call “fleshly religion”—the efforts by mere men to create commands which determine what is “holy” and what is “defiled” purely based on human authority. As Jesus had just instructed, such focus

on *human authority* voids the command of God so opposes God's rule and authority. Because it sets up a human-derived Self-Righteousness that voids God's Word and promises.

Imagine this: because the Pharisees, by their teachings, had so convinced Israel that "cleanness" and "uncleanness" was purely a matter of ceremonial purity, as they had defined it, they completely bypassed a need for Mashiach nor his promised Redemption.

Focusing on ceremonial purity shifted the focus away from the *unseen* matters of faith and Spirit, which allowed the Pharisees to *whitewash* their own sinful practices: hypocrisy, judgment, and even resisting God's Kingdom by rejecting His anointed Mashiach.

Today, little has changed for the Jewish people. While still embracing the *fleshly religion of*

Judaism, which, like Islam, honors the Torah, but voids it by its traditions, creating a *ceremony-based religion and system of sin* which requires no redemption from God, having devised a *fleshly-human-based* system to attain Self-Righteousness. Now, let's apply the methods of Jesus to the current Jewish view of Mashiach: If *righteousness* could be attained by Jewish self-righteousness, is there evidence that the Lord God accepts this "self-righteousness"?

- Did God send the Jewish nation into exile to the nations (not just to Babylon) because they were truly Self-(attained) Righteous?
- Has God shown his pleasure to the Jewish people in their exile, giving them the peace and rest which accompanies his favor, because they have already entered their perfection as a nation?

- In this current crisis, which will worsen as promised by Ezekiel 38 and Zechariah 12, until all the nations surround an unprotected and defenseless Israel, will the Mashiach of Jewish dreams truly save Israel—a mere human who reflects the heart of Judaism—a scholar sage, victoriously appearing with Talmud and Torah in hand, waving his Talit over his head to strike fear into the hearts of his enemies?

If Rabbinic Judaism is truly the Torah and Tanakh based truth from God, furnished with the authority of God and not a fleshly religion, why have (by the time of your reading this) the hosts of followers of Jesus as Mashiach been taken from this earth?

There is a great testing coming, and if Israel stubbornly clings to the fruit of what Jesus

prophesied was a “voiding” of the Word of God by preferring the traditions of man over the commands of God, abandoning the Worship and Fear of the Lord God for fleshly religion, then Israel all along has allied itself not with God but with the *Father of the Flesh*, who has from the beginning sold the “fleshly alternative” to the *submission of faith*.

When a group of Jews happened to “believe” in the words of Jesus, Jesus still said to them,

“³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:31-32

If you are a Jew, coming to Jesus Mashiach means you must be *freed of the flesh*. For, if you insist on clinging to *fleshly control*—to live your life with the self-awarded power to determine what is “defiling sin” apart from the Bible, you are still under the control of the flesh.

As these “believers” in Jesus eventually turned on him, refusing to give up their “control” over their thinking and their behavior, Jesus eventually said:

⁴³ Why do you not understand what I say? It is because you cannot bear to hear my word. ⁴⁴ You are of your **father the devil**, and your will is to do your father's **desires**. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in

him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John 8:44

Fleshly Focus or the Spirit:

When Jesus talks about the *defilement* that comes from the “heart,” he is referring to the nature that is natural and resident to all of us that is *irredeemably defiled*. This fleshly nature originates from Satan’s original deception and work at the tree, so all who choose to live *in the flesh* are truly the “children” of Satan, as Jesus says above.

Remember what Satan said to Eve:

⁴ But the serpent said to the woman,
“**You will not surely die.**” ⁵ For God
knows that when you eat of it your eyes

will be opened, and you will be **like God, knowing good and evil.**” Genesis 3:4-5

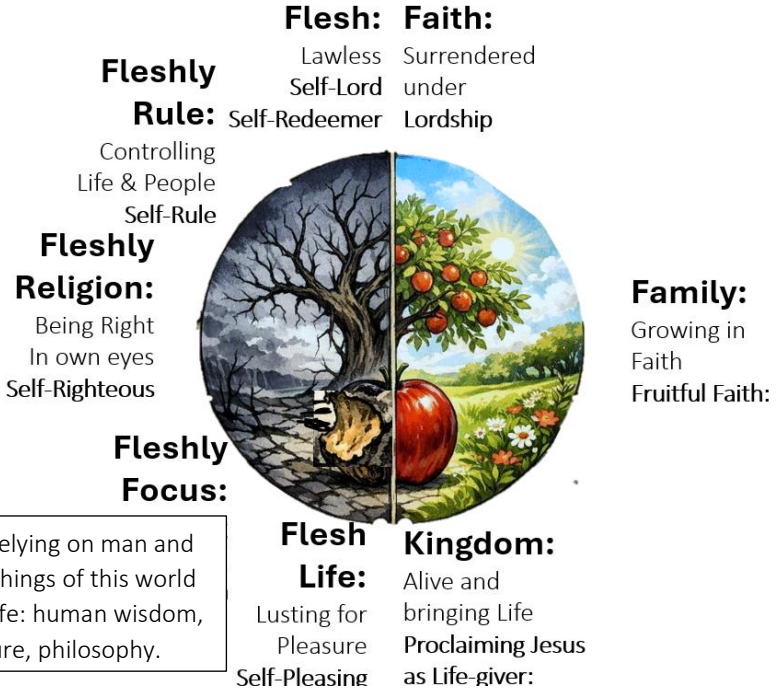
Satan appeals to Eve to live in the Flesh:

- **Authority:** “you will not die” your words, not God’s will have true authority and power.
- **Centrality:** “you will be like God” You will replace God as the Head and Central Importance of your life.
- **Righteous:** “knowing good and evil” You will determine what is “good and evil”—you can be Right and Alive apart from God.

This was the original test at the Tree of Knowing Good and Evil: would we remain obedient, surrender to the Lordship of God by faith? Or, will

we listen to the serpent and create a world and a life of our own human, *fleshly* making?

So, to live in the flesh is to live under our own human authority and rule, not God's. That is why Job's fall from faith and the Fear of God to Fleshly Self-righteousness showed that no matter how righteous we are, our *flesh is irreversibly corrupted and must be redeemed—replaced with a new life!*



Or, relying on man and the things of this world for life: human wisdom, culture, philosophy.

So, rebuke your people when they begin to lapse into the *flesh*, *especially* when they start to rely on the “flesh” so that faith becomes “religious effort that does not need the Spirit.”

We see Jesus rebuking—pointing out the error of the fleshly behaviors that threatened the integrity and life of these people:

- **Fleshly religion:** is designed by fleshly people and has no power to address deep-seated sin nor give life.
- **Fleshly heart:** is the *already evil* nature that we have inherited that abandons God and seeks life apart.

- **Fleshly desires:** when acted upon and followed, these *separate from God in sin* and defile the whole person.

Case Study: Cancerous *fleshly religion*.

Forgive me if at times this section became a cautionary rant against the *flesh*. But, I have seen the *insidious flesh* turn instances of healthy kingdom life into *horrible religion*. Read the book of Revelation, especially chapter 3 and the chapters preceding 20 on the judgement of Babylon to know how much the Lord also hates fleshly religion. In the “name of God,” fleshly religion put the Lord Jesus to death, will martyr a host of end-times saints, corrupted Israel for generations, and extinguished the Church’s flame of witness.

In your age of the Kingdom, beware the warning signs that the Church just overlooked as “human nature” because it was convenient to endorse fleshly religion, it brought people in, and it made money—until all our people became cold, selfish, worldly, and our seminaries disappeared until all there was left was well-funded cultural traditions.

At its heart, the *flesh* wants to look good and to control. When I was coordinating with the 20+ homegroup leaders what topics they’d be covering in the next season of ministry, the church’s senior pastor expressed the need to standardize what was taught and that it would be better to use books by published authors.

Such a suggestion was more fleshly and religious than Kingdom based.

- God appoints Spirit-empowered leaders for each of the groups, shepherds responsible for “feeding their sheep.” (Jer.3:15).
- *The* Lord Jesus as Head will lead each shepherding team to feed his people according to their needs.
- *Published writers a) have no relationship to us; b) have written popular content able to sell books.* What “anointing” do they have for the people at our church?
- The Kingdom requires to have *faith* in God and a measure of trust that the body, though not immune to missteps, will correct itself and build itself up by the Spirit. To “control content” in order to systematize Kingdom life will kill it.

That process of systematization, of converting what was by *faith*—alive, abounding, and natural, into *fleshly*—controlled, predictable, not

beholden to an outside (Jesus) power interfering, is what eventually killed the Church. That is why I hate fleshly religion.

Focus:

1. Fleshly Focus: external rules to appear Self-Righteous. 7:14-16
2. Fleshly Heart is Source of uncleanness. 7:17-22
3. Fleshly Fruit from Heart defile person: (lawlessness). 7:23



Fleshly Focus:
Self-Righteousness



Fleshly Heart:
Evil thoughts & lusts
and Corrupting



Fleshly Life:
Lawless and
Defiled

Consider:

You will likely be operating in a very different faith landscape by the time you read this. As the Church Age ends, so ends the age of *hidden*

spiritual realities. Starting with the *great evacuation*, there will be a steady onslaught of Biblical prophecies materializing before your and everyone's eyes. No more can you say, "Jesus is neither Lord nor will he come back for his church" for he will already have done that. And, the insulting portrait that Jews have conceived of Mashiach as being a *mere Shneersen* will, thankfully, be discarded in the dustbin of history. But, for what is coming, you don't need a Shneersen. You need the Son of God coming with the clouds of heaven.

So, in this age, you will still need *faith*, but the ability of the flesh to *slink and cower* under fleshly religion, at least the ones currently available, will seem less likely. Instead, all the fleshly religions of the world will consolidate against the Lord Mashiach. Still, I think there will still be a need to

caution your people against the flesh. As the Tree reminds us, the only safe place is the protective canopy of the Kingdom, spread over those who belong to Mashiach by Faith.

1. Fleshly Focus: external rules to appear Self-Righteous. 7:14-16

When Jesus calls out to the crowd to be heard, he addresses what was the prevailing appeal of *fleshly religion* at the time. A focus on the things “outside a person” (14) which can be handled in this world.

Again, the flesh focuses the *worshipper* on outward realities, what can be “seen,” because those guided by the flesh want total control, numbers, and data so they can rule over their realms. While Jesus admits that there is the reality of “defiling sin,” the spiritual reality of this defilement is *simply beyond* the reach of human

understanding, human rules, and human acts of righteousness.

So, all we have to know about Sin is what the Lord God states in the Word of God. And, any attempt to replace the freedom and simple faith in Jesus Mashiach with any human, fleshly rule, is sin, as Paul argues in Galatians and Colossians.

2. Fleshly Heart is Source of uncleanness. 7:17-22

When Jesus says that the “evil thoughts” and other sins come “from within, out of the heart” (21), he is describing the *current state* of all humans born from Adam and Eve. For, the Lord God himself promised, “You will surely die” if you choose a fleshly life and not a life of faith (Genesis 2:17). So, we are all “dead in our trespasses and sins” (Ephesians 2:1) because without the *spirit*, which died in the Garden at the foot of the Tree, we are simply “naked flesh” uncovered of the

Spirit (Genesis 3:7). Jesus is simply stating the reality of our spiritual condition. We are not simply “a little worse off” because of the sin of our first parents. Not just “mischievous” or “misguided.” We are spiritually and literally dead to God and powerless in our flesh. So, Jesus, in saying that “evil thoughts” and a host of other sinful things come from us, he is saying that we are already defiled and corrupted. The question is, how can we be atoned for and rescued from this defilement? Fleshly religion finds a rotted and dead corpse that is our *naked and dead flesh, and* it seeks worldly solutions to reverse its condition. It folds the corpse’s hands in prayer. Mouths words to recite in prayer. Forbids the corpse to eat certain foods. But, only Jesus Mashiach as Redeemer can take the corpse’s death and defilement and give it life! So, all people need the

resurrected life of the Kingdom, not fleshly religion.

3. Fleshly works from Heart defile person: lawlessness). 7:23

So, the fleshly heart is defiled because it is dead and cut off from the life of God. When Jesus lists the defiling evil that proceeds out of the heart, he says that when the heart's defilement is lived out in the body, that is the sin that "defiles a person" (23).

So, as a shepherd, it is no good for you to try to help people outside the kingdom "lead better lives." You are simply trying to teach a corpse how to become alive! Rather, introduce them to Jesus Mashiach, the only source of life.

Conversely, when you shepherd people who are already alive in Jesus Mashiach, know that they still with hearts that pull your people toward “defiling flesh.” So, look out for signs that they are giving in to the defiling lure of their *fleshly hearts*.

- Jesus lists the desires of the fleshly heart here;
- Paul lists the *works* that are produced when our people act out the fleshly desires: (Galatians 5:19-21), warning that those who live in the flesh “will not inherit the Kingdom of God” for they are living under the rule of a foreign power. For, to live under the power of the flesh is to serve Satan, the source of fleshly defilement.
- Thus, the disciples of Jesus must “put to death the deeds of the body” which the flesh lures them to do (Romans 8:14).

Question:

Further Discovery: