MARK: Losing Our Religion 5.25.08

"Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, [2] they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. [3] (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, [4] and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) [5] And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" [6] And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, '" This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; [7] in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' [8] You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men." [9] And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! [10] For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' [11] But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban' (that is, given to God)- [12] then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, [13] thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do." [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, foolishness. [23] All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." Mark 7:1-23 ESV

"Pharisees…scribes" Professional religious leaders of Jesus' day.
"ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed." Ceremonially unclean.
"wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders" Ritual. Replaced Scriptural authority.
"Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders…? Dig at Jesus.
"Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written," OT Prophet spoke to folks like them.
'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me" Hypocrisy in action.
"Moses said…Corban…making void the word of God…many such things" They were driving avoid responsibility for their parents by using a religious loophole—their pattern.

Primary Point:

Your religion is killing you! You think True Spirituality is about being clean on the outside but it is really about being clean on the inside. That cleanliness only comes through the Gospel.

What Religion Does:

1. Causes us to 'keep the rules' and miss the point.
2. Offers us a counterfeit cleanliness.
3. Obscures the beauty of the Gospel from us.
    a. Eternal and temporal sense/consequences.

Religion Vs. the Gospel: (chart also available at our website)

Looking for Religion in Our Own Lives:

1. Listen to your thoughts. (Think about your thinking.)
    a. *Based on the comparison, how do I approach God?*
    b. *Based on the comparison, how do I approach my faith?*
    c. *Based on the comparison, how do I approach others (and issues in their faith)?*
2. Listen to your words *("Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks")*
    a. *How do speak about God, my faith, others?*
3. Listen (pay attention) to the way you treat people.
    a. *Am I behaving like one of the Pharisees or like Jesus?*

Steps Toward 'Losing Our Religion' :

1. Repent and Believe the Gospel!
    a. Turn from sin and trust in Christ. A way of life.
    b. Meditate on the comparisons listed.

"nothing outside... can defile him… things that come out" Something within that comes out.
"heart…stomach" Heart was the seat of the emotions, the essence of their identity.
"all foods clean" Jesus overthrows the dietary laws. Points to inclusion of gentiles.
"What comes out of a person is what defiles him" Repeated for emphasis.
"For from within, out of the heart of man…" The source of all the evil is within.
"…all these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." A laundry list of sin.

Primary Point:

Spiritual cleanliness is a matter of the heart.

P: In their natural states, our hearts are dirty.

P: That's why religion is so dangerous.

It can change our outsides (our behavior) making us think that we are clean, but it can't change our insides (our heart).

Have our hearts been made clean?
Where do we still need to 'lose our religion'?

Visit www.crossinglouisville.com for more helpful resources, including study guides on Mark.

Works Consulted : Expositor's Bible Commentary, Life Application Bible, MacArthur Study Bible, Messages by Steve Hart, Numerous Other Commentaries on Mark