

August 26, 2018  
Sermon for the Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
St Peter Lutheran Church  
Bowie, TX  
Larry Knobloch, Pastor  
Mark 7:1–13

*J.J.- Jesu Juva—Help me, Jesus*

Mark 7:1–13 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. <sup>3</sup> (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, <sup>4</sup> 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.) <sup>5</sup> 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?” <sup>6</sup> 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; <sup>7</sup> in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ <sup>8</sup> You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.” <sup>9</sup> And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! <sup>10</sup> For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ <sup>11</sup> 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)— <sup>12</sup> then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, <sup>13</sup> thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior,  
Jesus Christ!

Amen.

A few year ago, around Christmas I looked at an ad in the newspaper paper, I went to a local store that said it was selling exactly what I wanted. When I got to the store, however, I couldn't find what I was looking for, so I asked one of the employees. To my surprise, he told me, "We don't have any. We never had any." "But," I protested, "they were in your ad in the paper" I was then informed, in a very polite manner, that different stores had different owners and not all choose to participate in regional sales. Silly me, believing that if a national chain store advertises it sells a certain product, it will in fact actually carry that product in every store!

If someone advertises something, a store or an individual, we would expect them to actually follow through on what they say or represent.

God has the same kind of expectation when He looks into our hearts. God desires that the faith we profess and practice will in fact be the same faith He finds inside us.

More than just what we advertise on the outside,

God desires that our hearts belong to Him.

Too often, what God finds is that we are guilty of false advertising—with hearts far from Him. We make a good showing and say the right things on Sunday morning, or anytime that we are around our "Christian" friends. At least most of them.

That is certainly what Jesus found in the scribes and Pharisees who came to Him from Jerusalem.

They believe that in His ignoring “*the tradition of the elders,*” they have found a way to discredit Him (vv 1–5). Not that they really cared about the meanings behind the “traditions”, it was all about the outward signs, what other people could see rather than what God really saw in their hearts.

So they strike at a supposed shortcoming in Jesus and His disciples. But Jesus actually uses their abuse of those traditions to unmask their hypocrisy, their false appearance of something that they really didn’t care about or believe.

Their hypocrisy is that they use their profession of love for God as a mask to excuse or hide the evil they harbor in their hearts (vv 6–8). And Jesus calls them on it as He quotes the prophet Isaiah: <sup>6</sup> *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; <sup>7</sup> in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’* (Mark 7:6–7) (Isaiah 29:13)

As an example of their hypocrisy, the Lord points to their use of the traditions to allow them to sidestep the Fourth Commandment (vv 9–13), saying to them: “*You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!*” (v.9)

When our profession of faith and outward works are not matched by a heart of faith, that’s false advertising...spiritual false advertising. And trust me, God is not fooled.

When we do and say all the right religious things because that's what we're supposed to do, or simply because our parents make us, or our spouse wants us to, or as a mask or even a dodge that we hide our sinful behaviors behind, we are guilty of honoring God with our lips, while our hearts are far from Him.

We might play nice at church or around our friends, but treat our neighbors poorly, whether in the workplace or in our neighborhood.

We might lift our spouses up in public, treating them as we have promised before God in our wedding vows, but then treat them shamefully at home with verbal and or physical abuse. We may praise our children in public and treat them like garbage at home.

While we may fool others and even ourselves, but God is not fooled. He knows what is in your heart and mind and He is not pleased.

He doesn't want worship and faith that is just lip service. He wants your heart! God so desires that our hearts belong to Him that He gave His own Son. That is a big deal...a huge price to pay for us to just give Him lip service.

The pages of Holy Scripture record for us how our God does a lot more than just pay lip service to us as He works in the Spirit to restore the world to Himself.

The lips of God's prophets—Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, John the Baptist—announced again and again God's promise to give the world a Savior from sin and death.

But the Holy Scriptures also record for us the story of all God actually did in order to keep His promises—preserving His people through the flood, the Red Sea, from the Philistines, from Babylon.

God didn't just make promises; He kept them all, finally, by giving His own Son.

God gave His Son to die. That was no lip service; that tore at the Father's very heart!

And Christ went willingly to the cross. All His words of teaching He backed up with that action of deepest, heartfelt love. And He continues to show us that love, each and every day!

He comes to us in His Word. That's why daily prayer and devotion are so important. Our Lord reaches out to us personally in His Word. We speak to Him and He answers us in prayer. He is with us in the Sacraments, the God who loves the world that much acts in our lives to make clear that His love includes you and me.

In Holy Baptism, He has called us each by name and adopted us as His own sons and daughters. We carry the mark of God's adoption with us daily. His Holy Spirit was given to us in Baptism and never leaves us. We can remind ourselves of this with the sign of the cross.

In the gift of His Son's true body and blood, in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion, He makes clear that His love for us is more than just a promise; that's the very body and blood given on the cross, and they are given to each of us personally!

In doing all this, the Lord strips away our hypocrisy so that our hearts do become his.

He strips away the mask of falsehood from the religious leaders from Jerusalem in the Text this morning because He desires that they turn from their ways and be forgiven.

Do you remember the account of King David? After he committed adultery, David went to great lengths, even murder, to cover up what he had done. Then he went right back to living a very religious life as he always had. Yet now it was only a mask used to hide his guilt. God loved David too much for that. That's why He sent the prophet Nathan to confront David with his sin. God wanted David's heart. God wanted David's faith to be real again, so He stripped away David's mask. He confronted David so David would confess his sin. He confronted David because He wanted to forgive him and He want David to know that He forgave him.

God loves you and me too much to allow us to continue to wear our faith as nothing more than a mask to hide our hypocrisy, our falsehoods.

Through His word of Law, He strips away our masks, because more than anything He desires to speak to us His word of forgiveness and grace. If we're wearing a mask, listening to the world, we probably won't bother to listen to His message of forgiveness.

So He acts; He brings our sins to light, to remove our empty shell of religion. God desires to give us hearts that belong to Him!

There's no false advertising with God. What you see is what you get.

What we see—made clearly visible in the life and death of Jesus—is a heart of love that wouldn't let us go our empty way. And what we get then is that loving heart for all eternity, His loving, forgiving.

Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus!

Amen.

*S. D. G - Soli Deo Gloria*

To God alone be glory

God Desires That Our Hearts Belong to Him

Mark 7:1–13

1. We are guilty of false advertising.
2. God so desires that our hearts belong to Him that He gave His own Son.
3. In the Sacraments, the Lord strips away our hypocrisy to make our hearts truly His.