**Life Group Notes Sunday 26th January 2025**

**Traditions and Truth**

**Reading Mark: 7:1-23**

1. An issue in this story is that people can hold to religious traditions that end up hindering the work and the will of God (v8)? Have we ever experienced such situations? What was our reaction?
2. The problem with the practice of Corban(v11) was that it prioritised the keeping of an oath (for example dedicating one’s wealth to the Temple) over the commandment to honour one’s father and mother. It effectively gave a person an excuse for not helping even their own parents. What excuses do we find people make for not helping others? What do we think is the underlying reason?
3. A theme in this passage is the distinction between ‘ritual purity’ (such as the ceremonial washing of hands v3) and ‘moral purity’ (the state of one’s heart v15). Does it help us to think of an action or attitude making us ‘impure’ rather than it just being plain wrong? Is it about how it is seen in the sight of God rather than man?
4. In the confrontation of Jesus with the Pharisees and teachers of the law he called them ‘hypocrites’, or religious frauds (v6). How do we feel about Jesus dealing with people in such a stern way? Can we accommodate that in our ‘mental picture’ of him? What does it reveal about him?
5. The ‘heart’ in Scripture is not so much the physical heart but is used to represent the centre or source of a person’s thoughts and actions – why does Jesus point to the heart as the real issue in our behaviour (v21)? What does the Bible see as the solution? See Ezekiel 36 v 26
6. Is Jesus’ judgement of the human heart too pessimistic (v21-22)? Don’t people do good things as well? Consider how his assessment relates to the gospel, that ‘God demonstrates his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us’ (Romans 5:8)?

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