

(In preparation for gathered worship next week, November 16, 2008)

Mark 7:1-30

Everybody agrees that human beings are flawed. Why else do we treat each other so poorly, falling into lust, anger, pride, envy and violence? But where do the flaws come from and how can they be rectified?

Only Jesus offers satisfactory answers to these vital questions. Read the passage above and meditate carefully on the following questions:

- 1) Why were the Pharisees so interested in the matter of defilement? See verses 1-7. According to Jesus, why was their focus misdirected? See verses 6-7.

- 2) What does it mean to 'leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of man' (verse 8)? How does the context (see verses 9-13) help with an answer?

- 3) What does Jesus mean when he says it is 'the things that come out of a person' (verse 16) that defile a person? How did those 'things' get within us in the first place?

- 4) If the evil of our lives is due to bad hearts and not environmental conditioning, how do we get new hearts? Is there a clue in verses 24-30? Explain.

- 5) Do you depend on Jesus for a good heart? How? In other words, what do you ask him in respect to your heart? And how do you ask it?