

Read Mark 7:14-23

14 Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “All of you listen,” he said, “and try to understand.

15 Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.'”

17 Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used.

18 “Don’t you understand either?” he asked. “Can’t you see that the food you put into your body cannot make you unclean?

19 Food doesn’t go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the toilet.” (By saying this, he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God’s eyes.)

20 And then he added, “It is what comes from inside that makes you unclean.

21 For from within, out of a person’s heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder,

22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.

23 All these terrible things come from inside you – from your heart; they are what make you unclean.”

Jesus called the crowd together so He could tell them something that He wanted them to understand (v. 14). What did He say in the parable that He spoke to the crowd (v. 15)? The things we take into our bodies from outside us don’t make us unclean. It’s what we do with the things from outside (when they come out of us) that makes us unclean. (Explained more clearly in later verses).

After the crowd left and Jesus was alone with His disciples, they asked Him what He meant by His parable (v. 17). How did Jesus explain what He had just said (vv. 18-19)? The things we take into our bodies outside us don’t make us unclean because they go into our stomachs and then go out of our body when we go to the bathroom.

What point was Jesus making? He was talking about food. Food doesn’t make us unclean. Jesus was saying it’s okay to eat anything. There are no rules against eating different foods.

Why was declaring all foods “clean” such a big deal? Because God had originally told the Jews not to eat certain foods (Leviticus 11) and now, hundreds of years later, Jesus is telling them that the rules have changed and now they can eat anything they want. **What were some of the foods they were originally not allowed to eat?**

What makes a person “unclean” (v. 20)? The bad things that come out of a person. Then Jesus goes on to list the bad things. **According to Jesus, where do all these bad things in vv. 21-22 come from?** Evil things, evil thoughts and all kinds of sins come from our hearts.

How do they get into our hearts? By what we see, what we hear and what we think. That’s one reason why it’s so important to memorize the Bible. Because it puts good things into our heart when we do. **What other ways can we put good things into our hearts?** Limiting or controlling what we see and hear – like the wrong kind of music or bad things on the computer. Read the Bible. Go to church and Sunday School.

What is the final result of all these bad things (v. 23)? They make us sin. And we are unclean before God.

What should we do if we commit one of these sins? Confess it to God and ask for His forgiveness. Then repent of the sin. Turn your back on it and go away from whatever was causing you to sin.