

## THE SERVANT KING

Mark 7:1-23

November 30, 2025



### Message Summary.

In Mark 7, the Pharisees care more about religious rules and image than about their hearts. Jesus says the real problem isn't what goes into us, but what comes out of our hearts—sin that flows from within. He's not just trying to clean up our behavior; He came to transform us from the inside out.

### Key Scripture Summaries.

**Mark 7:1–8** – Pharisees challenge Jesus about hand-washing traditions; Jesus calls them hypocrites who honor God with their lips but have hearts far from Him.

**Mark 7:9–13** – The Corban rule lets people dodge caring for their parents while looking spiritual, canceling God's command to honor father and mother.

**Mark 7:14–23** – Nothing outside a person makes them unclean; evil comes from the heart and overflows into thoughts, words, and actions.

**Proverbs 4:23** – Guard your heart; your life flows from it.

**Luke 15** – God rejoices over every sinner who repents, while the "older brother" shows how rule-keepers can miss the Father's heart.

### Start Talking.

1. Have you ever "cleaned" by stuffing things in a closet or room and shutting the door?
2. Where do you see people looking great on the outside but struggling on the inside (social media, school, church, work)?

### Start Thinking.

- Read Mark 7:1–8. What were the Pharisees upset about? What does Jesus say they're missing?
- Read Mark 7:9–13. What does the Corban rule do? How does it clash with "Honor your father and mother"?
- Read Mark 7:14–23. Jesus says the problem isn't "out there" but in here. How is that different from how people usually explain their behavior?

### Start Sharing.

1. What are some "invisible rules" Christians sometimes use to decide who's "really serious" about God?
2. Where are you most tempted to care more about image (how you look) than your heart (who you are before God)?
3. In what ways do you relate to the older brother in Luke 15—doing the right things but struggling to celebrate when "messy" people come home?

### Start Praying.

*Jesus, You see past our image and know our hearts. Forgive us for trusting our rules and appearances more than You. Create in us clean hearts and change us from the inside out. Make us a church that welcomes the "unclean" and celebrates every person who comes home to You. Amen.*

### Start Doing.

- Name Your Invisible Rules. Sometime this week, write down 2–3 "invisible rules" you tend to use to decide who's "good" and who's not. Ask God: "Which of these are Yours, and which are just mine?"
- Heart Before Image. Before a gathering (church, group, serving, work), pray: "Jesus, clean my heart, not just my image. Help me care more about who I am before You than how I look before others."
- Move Toward Someone. Think of one person you might naturally avoid, judge, or overlook. Take one simple step toward them this week—listen, encourage, invite, or serve them.
- Older Brother Check. When you hear a story about someone far from God coming to faith or coming back to church, notice your reaction. If there's any "older brother" in you, bring that to God and ask Him to give you His joy over every sinner who repents.