

**Read: Mark 7:1-8,14,15,21-23**

## Clean in Christ

### **Mark 7:14-15,20-23**

Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.”

He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

*In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.*

You know what’s gross? When people don’t wash their hands! Eww! Sometimes you might use chalk or paint or glitter and your fingers start to turn different colors. Other times hands get really dirty, like when you’re playing outside and you get mud everywhere, even under your fingernails. Could you imagine someone coming to dinner with hands like this—dirty, slimy, muddy hands—and then digging into a big bowl of watermelon without washing their hands? Eww!

It’s not just mud or paint that makes your hands dirty. Sometimes you can’t see what makes your hands dirty because they’re filled with germs. Imagine someone sneezing right into their hand and then wanting to shake your hand. Gross! Or how about a sick student coughing all over their hands and then touching everything at school—the desks, the books, the doors. Yuck! Bleh! Gross!

Some of the Jews in Jesus’ time were very serious about washing hands and other things. They weren’t really concerned about germs though. They did these things because they thought it made them more holy. They thought God would love them more because they did these special washings.

One day, when they asked Jesus why his disciples didn’t do this kind of special hand washing, Jesus told them how wrong they were. Jesus told them it is not dirt and mud that defiles a person (that means to make them dirty or unclean). Instead, it is what comes from the inside that makes a person unclean. It’s sin in us that makes us dirty in God’s sight. Our anger, our greed, our hatred, our mean words, our pride, and so much more—all of these make us so dirty that no water or soap could ever clean us.

Thankfully, Jesus could—and did! Jesus washed us clean himself. But he didn't use soap or hand sanitizer. Jesus washed us clean with his own blood that he shed on the cross. He washed away every stain of sin and made us clean and pure in God's sight. Even better, one day we will be with Jesus in heaven where we will be clean and holy forever! What a joy that will be!

*The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.*

### **Questions for the Younger Children**

- What makes us dirty in God's sight?
- How do we become clean in God's sight?

### **Questions for Elementary Age Children**

- Explain what Jesus meant when he said that what is inside of us makes us dirty.
- Explain the difference between having a dirty body and a dirty soul. Which is worse? Why?

### **Questions for Middle School and Above**

- Why was it so dangerous for the Jews to be obsessed with the laws about hand washing? What were they missing?
- When someone finds out that they are clean in Jesus, how might their life change and be different?

### **Closing Prayer:**

Dear Jesus, thank you for washing us clean in your own blood. Help me now to live a life that is pure and God-pleasing in your sight. Amen.

### **Hymn: CW 376:1-2 – Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness**

Jesus, your blood and righteousness My beauty are, my glorious dress;  
Mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed, With joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day—Who can a word against me say?  
Fully through you absolved I am From sin and fear, from guilt and shame.