

Monday Quotes



Grain

“When the church stops caring about refugees, it has stopped being the Church... When a religion gives no thought for the persecuted, the homeless, the losers of any era, it has stopped being a religion and has become an idolatrous cult.”

–Tom Harper, *Always on Sunday*

Field

⁵So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶He said to them, “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; ⁷in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’ ⁸You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.” ¹⁴Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.” ²¹For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, ²²adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”
Mark 7:5-8, 14-15, 21-23

Thoughts – Rev. Peter Heide, Interim Pastor in Morrisonville, WI

Jesus and the disciples have landed at Gennesaret. The people have run throughout the region and laid the diseased and broken before Jesus. He has brought them wholeness. Ritually, Jesus has taken their uncleanness onto himself and, in turn, has become unclean. Yet, the Pharisees and scribes do not confront Jesus about his uncleanness. As we see so often in our lives, passive-aggressive behavior takes over. Not wanting to confront their primary concern, the Pharisees and scribes accuse and blame the disciples of a lesser activity (not washing hands). Then they generalize it to condemn all dissident or abnormal behavior, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders?”

In response, Jesus calls the people together to talk with them about the difference between what God desires for God’s people and the ways that humanity has found of using the tradition of the elders to confuse and ignore God’s relationship with all of God’s people in favor of human practices of dismissal and self-advancement. These practices continue today. We, like the Pharisees and scribes, have established “right behavior (purity) codes” that favor the wealthy; and we too are unwilling to address the real issues of our world. As a nation, we are so concerned about the reprehensible behavior of a few privileged politicians and the uncleanness of our world that we are seduced away from caring for those whom we are charged to care for from the beginning.

We become focused on trying to change what we cannot change (other people’s behavior) and ignore those things we might change (systems that continue to oppress and maintain status quo). We condemn the Pharisees and scribes only to discover that they are we, ourselves; we are Pharisees and scribes. Throughout the Gospel of Mark, we, with the crowd continue to ask who this Jesus is and what discipleship looks like. This week, Jesus again calls upon us to risk getting our hands dirty in our discipleship and eat the new covenant meal of Christ’s justifying love and care. Happy Monday!

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Many Blessings upon you,

Pastor Peter