



# CONNECT GROUP NOTES

## Sunday 03.09.2023

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“Inside Out”

### **Preacher**

Ps. Nathan Bean

### **Scripture**

“The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.[a])

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“These people honor me with their lips,  
but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain;  
their teachings are merely human rules.’

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”



9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe[c] your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’[d] and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’[e] 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” [16]

17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? 19 For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

20 He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.””

Mark 7:1-23

## **Thought**

Faith is less about the questions we ask Jesus and more about the questions He asks us. When He asks questions of us, our hearts are bare before him. This is the basis of our faith. So often we are tempted to think that if we have all our questions answered, we will find faith, but this is not the case. In fact, it’s not that our questions are answered, it’s that they shrink in the light of Jesus.



Sometimes questions become our safety blankets. We use them as barriers to allowing Jesus to draw close. We focus on the question rather than the person of Jesus. But what really matters is allowing Him to question our hearts.

The religious people in the day believed that they would be found righteous in God's eyes if they obeyed all the laws. Yet these actually become barriers to reaching God. We find ourselves focusing on the questions, on the actions, rather than Christ Himself. Deep down we can believe that as long as we deal with the outside things, God will accept us. If our actions line up, we'll be fulfilled.

In our modern world, it may not be religious observance that distracts us, we may try to fill our lives with activity, with career, with relationships, with self-improvement. But what if we have it all inside out?

Jesus reminds us that our faith journey has little to do with what we do on the outside, but that it's all about what He does on the inside. As we expose our hearts to the Lord, we find ourselves healed and set free, not by performing, acting. God doesn't want our religious observance, our performance, our striving. He wants our heart. It's heart first. From that place, our actions align.

So let us set aside our striving, our questions, and dare to stop and be vulnerable before Christ.. To allow Him to see us, to truly peer into our deepest thoughts, motives, desires, and to let Him speak. He speaks love into our very being, and that love transforms us from the inside.

### **Discussion Points**

1. Why do you think we have so many questions about God and life?
2. What do you think vulnerability before Jesus looks like?
3. Is there a question that I need to lay down today, and invite Christ to do a deep work in my heart?



## **Personal application + Prayer**

Lord,

*Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts.* I lay my life before you afresh today. Do what you will, make me, mould me and change me. I lay down all striving and I place my world in your hands. Thank you that you care for me, that you will never leave me nor forsake me.

Amen.