

Inside Out



SABBATH—AUGUST 3

READ FOR THIS WEEK'S LESSON: Mark 7:1–13; Mark 7:14–19; Mark 7:24–30; Mark 7:31–37; Mark 8:11–13.

MEMORY VERSE: “It is not what goes into a man’s mouth from the outside that makes his mind and heart sinful [filled with sin; not clean]. It is what comes out from the inside that makes him sinful’ ” (Mark 7:15, NLV).

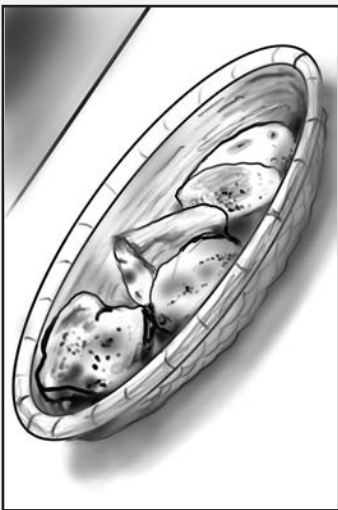
THIS WEEK, we study Mark 7 and the first half of Mark 8. At the beginning of Mark 7, Jesus makes the Jewish spiritual leaders angry because He rejects their false religious ideas and teachings. Jesus rejects these things in a way that shows He supports something very important to Christian life today. We will learn what that is this week.

Then Jesus tells a riddle. This riddle helps people understand true faith.

After these things, Jesus goes to Tyre and Sidon. There He meets a woman who is the only person in the Books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John to argue with Jesus and win! Jesus gives her what she asks for because of her faith.

Mark 7 teaches us an important lesson about miracles. Miracles are very wonderful. But they alone are not enough to open hearts to Bible truth. Just look at Israel’s spiritual leaders. What good did Jesus’ miracles do for them, right? They rejected Jesus.

In Mark 8, we will look at how bread is a symbol for human teachings and rules. The stories this week contain important lessons about religious life and worship.



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HUMAN TEACHINGS COMPARED WITH GOD'S COMMANDS (Mark 7:1–13)

Read Mark 7:1–13. What important Bible truths do we learn from these verses?

Make a picture in your mind of children studying these verses in Sabbath School. When they get home, the children announce to their mothers that they no longer need to wash their hands before they eat because Jesus said so! But this story is not about germs or health.

In Jesus' day, many Jews cared about having clean hearts. In the past, the spiritual leaders made a rule about handwashing. The leaders commanded everyone to wash their hands so that they would stay clean inside their hearts. In Moses' time, only the priests or spiritual leaders needed to follow this rule (Exodus 30:17–21). But in Jesus' day, everyone must obey it. So, when Jesus' followers break this rule, the Jewish leaders complain to Jesus.

Jesus answers their complaint with a strong Bible quote from Isaiah (Isaiah 29:13). In this verse, Isaiah scolds the Jews who say they honor God but do not keep His law. Isaiah also scolds the Jews for replacing God's commands with man-made rules.

In His answer to the Jewish leaders, Jesus also includes God's command to honor our parents (Exodus 20:12). We must take care of our parents in their old age. Jesus compares this teaching with the religious rule that allows someone to give a gift to God. (The word "gift" comes from the word "**corban**" in the Greek language.) The spiritual leaders allowed a man to give a gift to God but continue to use it for himself. At the same time, the spiritual leaders allowed the man to refuse to help his parents who were old and needed this gift. Can you imagine in your mind the conversation between a young man who followed this rule and his old parents? The young man could say, "I'm sorry, Father. I would really love to help you, but I gave the money to the temple."

Jesus attacks this type of false religious teaching. The Jewish leaders made their rules more important than the Bible. When they did that, they sinned against God.

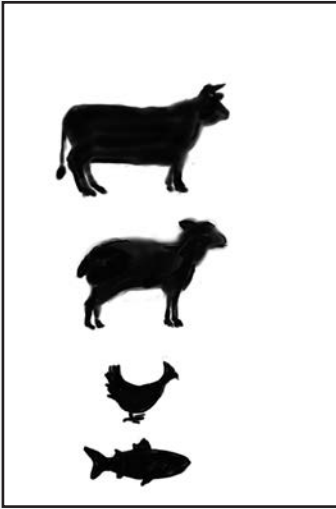
Jesus doesn't believe that the handwashing rule is necessary or part of God's plan. Jesus' answer shows us that He supports God's law and not human rules. (Also read Mark 1:44; Mark 7:10–13; Mark 10:3–8; and Mark 12:26, 29–31.)



The children announce to their mother that they no longer need to wash their hands before they eat because Jesus said so!

CLEAN HANDS OR CLEAN HEART? (Mark 7:14–19)

Read Mark 7:14–19. What did Jesus mean when He told the riddle in Mark 7:15?



Are Seventh-day Adventists wrong to teach that church members who do eat meat should only eat meat from the clean animal list in Leviticus 11?

Many people misunderstand Jesus' words in Mark 7:14–19. Is Jesus saying that people no longer need to worry about keeping the food laws in Leviticus 11? Are Seventh-day Adventists wrong to teach that church members who do eat meat should only eat meat from the clean animal list in Leviticus 11?

First, we must remember that Jesus just finished giving reasons for why we should obey the law of Moses (Mark 7:6–13). So, right after that, do you really think He would say that we don't need to follow the food laws that God gave to Moses (read Mark 7:14–19)? Of course not! Second, the food rules that the Jewish spiritual leaders taught did not come from the Old Testament. The food laws of Moses came from the Old Testament. Third, what Mark 7:19 is really saying is that the food rules that the Jewish leaders made were false. One of these rules said that if a Jew touched food that a non-Jew touched, then the food would make the heart of a Jew dirty.

What makes a person's heart dirty? Read Mark 7:20–23 for Jesus' answer.

In Mark 7:19, Jesus says that food doesn't go into the heart. Food goes into the belly and goes through the body. But in Mark 7:21–23, Jesus says that evil comes from inside the heart. Jesus gives a list of evil behavior and sins that start with evil thoughts and end with evil actions.

In Mark 7:10, Jesus includes breaking the fifth commandment on His list of evil behavior and sins. Honoring your parents is the fifth commandment. Every commandment from the second part of the law is included on Jesus' list. In Mark 7:7, Jesus also talks about empty worship. When we break the first four commandments, our worship is empty. So, this story in Mark 7 shows us that Jesus supports God's law.

Maybe you know and understand all the correct teachings and beliefs. But who owns your heart? God? Or self and Satan?

CRUMBS FOR THE DOGS (Mark 7:24–30)

Read the story in Mark 7:24–30. What important lessons do we learn from this story?

The story in Mark 7:24–30 also brings up some difficult questions. First of all, why does Jesus compare this woman to a dog?

In Mark 7:27, Jesus says the children should be fed first. So, if the children are the “first,” then there must also be another group who is “second,” right? Jesus also uses a special form of the word “dogs,” or “little dogs.” This special form doesn’t mean puppies. The word for “dogs” that Jesus uses means the dogs that are allowed to come inside the house. Street dogs are not allowed inside. Jesus’ words about the “dogs” who can come inside the house give the woman hope.

“She answered, ‘That is true, Lord. But the dogs under the table can eat the pieces of food that the children don’t eat’ ” (Mark 7:28, ERV).

How did this woman come up with this brave answer? For sure, love for her daughter filled her with courage. Jesus’ words about the dogs gave her hope because they showed her that she was the same as a dog inside the house. The dog was under the table at the feet of the Master of the house. In the same way, the woman fell down at Jesus’ feet. There, she asked Him to help her daughter. The dog was allowed to eat the food that fell on the floor. In the same way, the woman asked for what the dog was allowed to have.

The woman’s answer shows her faith. She wanted Jesus to heal her daughter who was at home. The woman knew this miracle was easy for Jesus. That’s why the woman compared this miracle to a small crumb of food. The woman said that this miracle would be easy for Jesus to do because He was very powerful. Her problem was the same as a small crumb compared to Jesus’ strength.

“Jesus showed the woman that she was no longer a stranger in Israel. She was a child of God and part of His family. As a child, she may share in the Father’s gifts that He gives to His children.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 401, adapted.

Why is it wrong to hate other people who are different from you? Why does this hate go against the teaching of Jesus? How can we clean our hearts of these evil feelings?



Jesus’ words about the “dogs” who can come inside the house give the woman hope.

THE MAN WHO HAD TROUBLE SPEAKING (Mark 7:31–37)

Read the story in Mark 7:31–37. Who was brought to Jesus? What did Jesus do for this man?

Jesus took the long way back to Galilee from Tyre and Sidon. Jesus went north from Tyre, up through Sidon. Then He went down through the area that was to the northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Finally, Jesus arrived near the sea. Jesus may have taken the long way back to Galilee so that He could spend more time teaching His followers.

Someone brought a man to Jesus when he came to Galilee. Mark doesn't tell us who brought the man to Jesus. The man was deaf, and he had trouble speaking.

Jesus understands the man's needs. So, Jesus takes the man aside to heal him in private. As modern readers, we may think that what Jesus did next to heal the man was strange. Jesus put His fingers in the man's ears. Next, Jesus spits and touches the man's tongue. Then Jesus sighs or takes a deep breath and then blows His air out. We see from the story that Jesus touches the parts of the man that need healing. But why did Jesus sigh? "Jesus sighed because He thought about all the people who would not listen to His teachings. Jesus sighed because He thought about all the people who would refuse to accept Him as the Savior." —Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 404, adapted.

Jesus healed the man. The man could now hear and speak with no problem. Jesus' sigh helps us to understand that God has put limits on Himself. God will not force Himself on anyone. He gives us free choice. All people are free to choose the one they will serve: Jesus, who is the Prince of Life, or Satan, who is the prince of evil. Jesus could make everyone listen to Him if He wanted. But He will not force anyone to accept Him as the Savior.

This story shows us the things that God can do for the ones who come to Him for help. Maybe you are afraid to share your faith with other people. Maybe you feel the same as this man that Jesus healed because you have trouble talking about your faith or knowing just what to say. Jesus' miracle of healing this man gives us hope that Jesus can help us talk about Him to people who need to know about His love.

God gave us the gift of communicating with other people. How are we using this gift to honor Him?



“Jesus sighed because He thought about all the people who would not listen to His teachings.”

WATCH OUT FOR BAD BREAD! (Mark 8:11–13)

Read the conversation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders in Mark 8:11–13. What did the leaders say that upset Jesus?

Why didn't Jesus do a miracle to show the leaders that He was God? To understand why Jesus refused, we must remember what Jesus says at the end of Mark 3. At the end of this chapter, Jesus talks about the sin against the Holy Spirit. If people refuse to believe what they do see, then another miracle won't convince them. Miracles aren't enough to convince people who refuse to believe.

What did the followers forget? What lesson did Jesus want to teach them? Read Mark 8:14–21 for the answers.

Jesus warns His followers against the “yeast” of the Jewish spiritual leaders and King Herod. Yeast is added to bread dough to make it rise. What is this “yeast” that Jesus talks about? “Yeast” is a word picture for teachings (compare with Matthew 16:12).

But the followers don't understand what Jesus is talking about. They think Jesus is talking about buying real bread! Jesus asks His followers some questions to help them understand. Jesus is disappointed that His followers don't understand the work He came to do. Jesus' words help us remember what He says in Mark 4:10–12 about people who don't understand. Jesus uses strong words to help His followers understand their mistakes.

In Mark 8:19, 20, Jesus asks His followers questions about the number of baskets of bread that were left over after He fed the 5,000 and the 4,000 (Mark 8:1–10). Both of these stories should have taught the followers that how much or little we have does not limit God in His work. Jesus asks a final question in Mark 8:21: “Then Jesus said to them, ‘You remember these things I did, but you still don't understand?’ ” (ICB). Look at all that the followers saw already with Jesus, right? So, why, after all these experiences, do they continue not to understand?

Think about all the proof God gives us to believe in Him and His love. God gives us so much, right? So, why do some of us continue to doubt?



Miracles aren't enough to convince people who refuse to believe.

ADDITIONAL THOUGHT: Read Ellen G. White, “Tradition,” “Barriers Broken Down,” and “The True Sign,” in *The Desire of Ages*, pages 395–409.

“Many Christians today hide in their hearts a secret wish. They want other people to praise them. This sin fills the hearts of many of the Lord’s followers today, just as it did in Bible times. This secret wish will ruin our work for Jesus and hurt our friendships with other people. So many of God’s people want other people to honor and praise them. When we love self and want an easy way to be saved, we will replace God’s commandments with man-made rules. Jesus’ words of warning to His followers are also a warning for us. ‘Be careful,’ Jesus warned them. ‘Watch out for the yeast [makes bread rise; also a word picture for the false teachings and man-made rules] of the Pharisees [Jewish spiritual leaders]. [Mark 8:15, NlrV].

“Jesus’ religion is holy and honest. When the Holy Spirit lives in our hearts, we will want to give all the glory and praise to God. Only God is powerful enough to empty our hearts of all pride and change us. When this change happens in our lives, we know that God is working. Faith should destroy the selfish spirit in our hearts. Faith should cause us to seek to honor God and not ourselves. When these things happen in our lives, we know that we are following God. Jesus said, ‘Father, honor Your name!’ [John 12:28, NLV]. Jesus followed this rule His whole life. If we follow Jesus, we also will follow this important rule. Jesus commands us to ‘live the way Jesus lived.’ 1 John 2:6 [ERV]. ‘We can be sure that we know Him if we obey His teaching.’ 1 John 2:3 [NLV].”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, page 409, adapted.



“‘Watch out for the yeast [makes bread rise; a word picture for the false teachings and man-made rules] of the Pharisees [Jewish spiritual leaders].’ [Mark 8:15, NlrV].”

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- ① As a Christian, what do you do to keep your heart clean?
- ② Who are the “dirty” people in your community? What can you do to share the Good News about Jesus with them?
- ③ What can you and your class members do to share the Good News about Jesus in little ways with your neighbors?

PART 3: PRAYING FOR FATHER TO BE SAVED

During the time that Anush was a university student, she watched a film about a Mexican boy. The little boy prayed for his father to give his heart to Jesus. The boy said, “I believe that if I pray for my father every day, he will accept God.”

The story filled Anush with hope. She decided to pray every day for Father to get baptized. She started praying four years before her own baptism. Two years after her baptism, she continued to pray for him. She was sure that Father would give his heart to God. But then Anush started to have trouble at home with Father. So, she wondered how much longer she’d need to wait for her prayers to be answered.

After Anush was baptized, she started to do a lot of work for the Seventh-day Adventist Church. She also volunteered for many of the church’s programs. Sometimes she got paid for her work. Other times, Anush didn’t get paid any money.

At first, Father didn’t complain because he gave Anush permission to go to church and get baptized. In Armenia, many fathers make the decisions for their families.

But Father wanted the best for his daughter. He didn’t understand why she worked so hard for so little money. Father told Anush, “The church is using you. You have good skills. The church is not giving you what they owe you.”

Father continued to complain about the church whenever Anush was at home. She didn’t like it. Whenever she was asked to help out in a church program, Anush asked Father for permission. Father allowed her to go but complained every time.

Anush decided to have a heart-to-heart talk with God. She prayed, “God, I know that Father will come to you. But I’m so tired of all his complaining. Please help me.”

Anush told Mother, “Today, I’m praying with all my heart to God. Join me. We don’t want Father to keep complaining. We want Father to go to church with us.”

In Armenia, many mothers and children go to church without their husbands and fathers. Many families are fine with doing things this way as long as the men allow the mothers and children to go and do not hurt them for their faith. But Anush was no longer happy with going to church without Father. She wanted Father to go to church, too.

Mother agreed to pray. Anush’s heart filled with hope again. She was sure that God would touch Father’s heart. Anush believed Father would give his heart to God at any time.

Part of last quarter’s 13th Sabbath Offering helped build a special center for families in Yerevan, Armenia. Thank you for your offerings which help to share the Good News with people. Anush’s story continues next week.

INSIDE
Story

by ANDREW MCCHESENEY



Anush decided to pray every day for Father to get baptized.