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Mark 7:1-23 NKJV  
**What Defiles a Life 2/07/16**

1Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. 2Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. 3For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. 4When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.

5Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?”

6He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

‘This people honors Me with their lips,  
But their heart is far from Me.

7And in vain they worship Me,

Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

8For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men —the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do.”

9He said to them, “All too well you reject the commandment of God, that you may keep your tradition. 10For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.’ 11But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban” —’ (that is, a gift to God), 12then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

14When He had called all the multitude to Himself, He said to them, “Hear Me, everyone, and understand: 15There is

nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. 16If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

17When He had entered a house away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him concerning the parable. 18So He said to them, "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him, 19because it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods?" 20And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. 21For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

What do you judge in your life that's really good? Deeds, actions, accomplishments, success in providing for those that you love? Things like a house, food, clothing, maybe a car, a TV, maybe vacations. Maybe you think of success also as relating to your savings account, your retirement provision, things like that. Some people think of their insurance, not just for their house and car, but looking ahead, some people provide insurance for themselves and their mate or for a nursing home. Maybe I had a letter just a week or so ago wanting to know if I wanted to insure myself or my wife against cancer. And they had proposals to do that. And of course, just sometimes just catastrophic incidents that go into the extreme beyond what other insurances would provide for and for medicines that would be needed. And then lastly, a lot of people buy burial insurance, you know, just so they don't leave a burden on those that they leave behind. And then of course, they want to make sure they leave an inheritance, if that's possible, if they can, to bless those that they leave behind.

Now, I want to say right off, none of these things are evil in themselves. They're not. Don't think that by looking at things like this that are material, that have -- that touch our lives and that we worry about, sometimes we shouldn't, but we do, that they are in themselves evil. They're not. They're not in themselves evil, but they are externals. They are things that we could call the stuff of this world, the stuff that relates to our physical being, our welfare, our continuance in this world. And by themselves, the thing is that they don't measure what God says is good. You could have all these things in abundance and still perhaps fall short. If you want to look over your life, you want to look over your life and say, "Would God say that things are good in my life?" These

things all fall short of being what God says is good. Good in themselves, but what God wants to see in us goes far beyond this stuff. You have to look deeper.

### **Conflict with Pharisees**

#### **What About Ceremonial Washing**

And for that, I want you to open with me to the book of Mark, chapter 7. I want to read an instance here in chapter 7 in the Lord Jesus' ministry when he was beset upon by the Pharisees and scribes. Here in Mark 7, verse 1. "Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to him, having come from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread," that means food, "with defiled," that is, with unwashed hands, "they found fault."

Now I have to pause and say, every mother wants to make sure that their children come to the table after washing their hands. Why? Because they may very well have been playing out in the yard, they may have been making mud pies, they may have been digging, they may have been just on a farm, they may have been out playing with the chickens or whatever. They could be bringing to the meal time things on their hands that, should they not wash them, might make them sick. And, of course, to protect them from sickness, a mother would say, "Wash your hands, then come to the meal." Alright, well, you would probably read this and think that's what's going on, but you're wrong.

No, the Pharisees were not simply saying, "You know, you're not supposed to eat a meal with dirty hands." They went far beyond that. They went to the place of saying, "Well, it doesn't matter, you could come to the table with the cleanest hands in the world, but you still have to wash them." What do you mean, wash them? He meant dip them. You had to dip them in water, and then you were ready to eat. In other words, it was a ceremony. It wasn't for the good reason of trying to get dirt off your hands. It had come to the place for them when it was just a mere ceremony. Anytime you take something that is perhaps meant for a good reason to be done, and you turn it into a ceremony, you've destroyed its meaning. But, you see, the Pharisees lived by ceremony. And so they were really upset with the disciples coming to eat with unwashed hands. They hadn't dipped their hands, and they hadn't gone through the ceremony.

Now, you have to remember, they were the teachers, so-called spiritual teachers. They were constantly telling the Jewish people, "Look, you must dip your hands before you eat." And so they agreed on that. All the Pharisees taught it. All the scribes taught it. It was established soundly in their teaching. And if you chose not to do it, you were saying, "I'm not going to surrender to your teaching." Now, what was important to them wasn't simply that they could get everybody to dip their fingers in the water, but that everybody across the whole

nation would submit to their teaching. And they wanted to make sure on these little ritual things that these people were submissive to them.

Well, the apostles were not doing that. I should say disciples. They weren't doing that. They were not doing that. They were not showing submission to the Pharisees' rituals. After all, they were with Jesus. Sometimes they were out in the countryside, and they were, as those that were just wandering along, they were, by God's word, permitted to take grain from the edges and corners of the fields, not from the main part of the field. No, they couldn't do that. But those seeds that had gotten beyond the field and fallen out into the grasses and so forth and sprouted and produced some crop of minimal amount, they could go to those areas and they could take those seeds. They could rub them in their hands, and that, of course, would take the shaft off of the seeds. Then they could blow the shaft away with their breath. They would have a few seeds left in their hand, and then they could eat the seeds. The problem, if Jesus didn't see anything wrong with that, why should they feel that they should obey the rituals of the Pharisees? And they didn't, and Jesus found nothing wrong with that. But the Pharisees certainly did when they saw it, and they wanted to know why this was going on. "For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way." That's your indication that it was a ritual holding the tradition of the elders.

Now, they went so far in the teachings of the elders, the other elders would be rabbis of former years, they went so far as to explain in detail how you were to do this. It had to be a bowl, not of wood, you know. It had to be a bowl of certain hard material so it wouldn't be polluted, it wouldn't bear germs, or we would call them germs, but they would say just filth in the pores of it. It had to be a hardened surface material. It had to be with clean water. It had to be what was called living water, fresh flowing water from a deep well or from a stream. It had to be placed in front of the person, you know, so that they could do this before all the people. Everybody had to see that they were doing this, and on and on they had all the regulations on how to do this.

Disciples were not doing it. So it says, "When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash." That's the Pharisees. "And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches."

Now, you understand that. If you want to see it in our modern day, I think Lysol has an advertisement on television to tell you to use their spray and run around behind your children and spray the telephone and spray the seats where they sit and spray wherever they touch, spray the kitchen counters, and you're

going to keep your children from having all kinds of terrible diseases. Well, we know there's some truth in that, right? Yes. But then on the other hand, we also know that somebody that truly does that all the time, all day long, is going to some extreme. And we would think, you know, God bless that mother, but if she runs around after her children every time they touch something and sprays, that would occupy her day. You know, the only time she would have apart from that would be when they were taking their naps. Of course, mothers love that time anyway, but anyway. But you see how it would grow out of this kind of thinking, although this was for spiritual cleanliness.

"Then the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?'"<sup>1</sup> That's the key. It wasn't really the fear that their hands were dirty. They weren't following the tradition of the elders. They weren't surrendering to the leadership, the so-called spiritual leadership that was installed there among the Jews. They wanted to make sure everybody submitted to them. "Why weren't your disciples doing this?" The Lord answers this way, you know.

### **Peer Pressure Involved**

Before I even go to that, let me make some modern day applications. We don't have Pharisees per se here today, but we do have very powerful forces working around us. One label I can use is the crowd, you know, the crowd around us. And the crowd says, "This is best," or "This is best," and you have to submit to these ideas. "This is what's desirable. This is what's most desirable." Follow the crowd. Now, I speak basically to adults here, but I want to tell you this truly hits kids when they, most particularly, are in their junior high years. It intensifies in high school, and it's intensified in college age, young people. Those are the years when what the crowd says is truly, truly powerful. You've got to do what the crowd says.

For instance, years ago there was an item on the market called Air Jordans. They were an athletic shoe that had a particular design, and they were endorsed by Michael Jordan, a great basketball star. Some believe him to be the greatest basketball player that's ever lived. Perhaps so, perhaps not, but he was, and perhaps to some degree still is, an idol, a sports idol. At the time that the Air Jordan shoes came out, many little children, many little children, because they idealized Michael Jordan, felt they had to have a pair of Air Jordans. Unfortunately, a lot of those kids were from segments of the society where they didn't have the money to buy those kind of things. The Air Jordan shoe was priced double or triple or even quadruple the prices of other such athletic shoes.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark 7:5

I was stunned when I first heard the retail price of the Air Jordans. When they first came out, I know that they were in the \$125 range. I know they went up from there, but that sounded to me like pure craziness for a kid to have a pair of athletic shoes that cost \$125.

Now, with time, those shoes became \$150 shoes, \$185 shoes, and I don't even know where they've gone since then. But can you think of the many, many tens of thousands of little kids that had this value pressed down upon them that to really arrive, to really have what the crowd thought was best, you had to have these shoes? You know what it led to? It led to muggings. It led to beatings. It led, in fact, in a few cases, rare, thank the Lord, to some cases of killing. To steal shoes from the feet of some child that had them. Now, I don't say that the child that had them in and of themselves had the money to buy them. Maybe their parents had to sacrifice greatly to give those shoes to that child. But the pressure out among those children to have those shoes was so great that they would even go to the place of beating up some kid and stealing his shoes. It was real.

Don't just read this stuff and think there's no cause. It's all a sign of how kids, as they come up into maturing years, are put under the pressure of their peers. The group pressure around them to measure up, to be like what the crowd says is best. It goes on through high school. It goes on through college. It touches something like the level of dress. This comes out in high school even more than just junior high. If you don't dress up to a certain level, that level of dress is used to segregate kids. It segregates them into the elite group and to the, well, I'll call them the wannabes. The ones that want to be in the elite group but can't. They don't have the money to wear the kind of sweaters perhaps or the kind of blouses or the kind of jeans that some of the elite group put on. I can't tell you what has happened to the price of jeans. It almost takes your breath away.

I used to think designer jeans were a joke, you know, until you find out that, well, every woman thought she had to have them. When I learned there could be designer jeans of \$200 or \$300 a pair, these are jeans now. I'm talking about denim slacks of some kind with somebody's name on them probably. Then it gets more bizarre because I found out that after a while they decided you had to have them bleached. They had to look old. Then they had to look raggedy. They even got to the place where you had to have your flesh shown through them to really have the greatest kind of jeans you can have.

I thought, boy, you know, I've lived too long. I've gone full circle. If I ever went to school in something like that, I would be so ashamed, you know. I'd be

so ashamed that I had to come to school in some jeans that actually you could see some of my skin underneath, you know, through some of the holes. I would never do that. I was poor. I was poor. But my grandmother would never let me go to school with something like that.

I think, what has happened? I'll tell you. The crowd has decided that that is good. That's okay. You see, what the crowd decides is what motivates all the lesser ones that are trying to follow the crowd to do whatever the crowd says is great. If the crowd says, you know, you need purple hair, everybody thinks they need purple hair. If you need to have a certain brand of shirt, you've got to have a certain brand of shirt. And on and on and on it goes. New clothes, new shoes, the latest styles and everything that you'd wear, all those things are used to segregate people. Hairdos, makeup, and even cars. In high school this crops up. You get to a place along the route junior and senior year when whether you have a car or not -- [coughing] Excuse me. Truly sets you in a distinctive class. I want to tell you, while I was in high school, I finally in my senior year did have a car. But I never felt that I was in the upper crust because the reason I wanted a car was to be able to transport kids to Bible Club. We had an interdenominational Bible Club that we had established. And what made me really proud was that I could get from 12 to 15 kids in that car.

Now, I just shudder to think what would happen today if some cop stopped somebody with 15 kids in a two-door car. But I had -- that's what I did. I would -- people would sit on the laps of other people and then somebody would sit on their lap. You know, three levels.

### **Jesus' Response**

But, no, the cars -- it's a vicious world of class structure out there. Vicious, vicious. Self-elevation going on all the time and the degrading of others going on all the time out there. And that carries over into adult life, actually. It doesn't just stop with college life. And it doesn't -- not for everybody. Oh, thank you. Not for everybody. But I would have to say for self-righteous people, that can come right on into their adult life. Well, Jesus taught another way to live. So I want you to go back here. We'll look at this here at verse 6 where Jesus answers. "He answered and said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. "And in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. "For laying aside the commandments of God, you hold a tradition of men, "the washing of pitchers and cups and many other such things you do.' "He said to them, 'All too well you respect the commandments of God. "You reject the commandments of God that you may keep your

traditions.' "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother, and he who curses father or mother, "let him be put to death. "But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "'Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban.'" That is a gift to God. "Then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, "making the word of God of no effect through your traditions which you have handed down "and many such things you do."

So Jesus was just pointing out to them that they had raised up ways of dealing with money and with material things that really, in the end, made them able to get around and avoid and actually deny the commandments of God. They didn't have to honor their father and mother. Part of honor for the father and mother is this thing of making sure that they have food to eat and clothes to wear, making sure they're taken care of. But the Pharisees had gotten around that. They didn't have to do that. Their wealth was dedicated to God. And therefore, they could live off of it and enjoy it, but they couldn't feel any responsibility to take care of their parents.

### **What Really Defiles a Person**

So then the principle that must rule in a Christian's life is given to us here by Jesus. Let me read it with you up here. Verse 14, "When he had called all the multitude to himself, he said to them, 'Hear me, everyone, and understand.'" In other words, the former verses kind of cropped up as he was out there and the Pharisees came to him and so forth, but he wanted the whole crowd to hear what he had to say on this subject. And so he gathers the whole crowd together and he says, "There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him, but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."

Now, he's not talking about what comes out of the man physically as off cast, you know, either solid or liquid. He's not talking about that. He's talking about what comes out of the man, the being of the man from the heart. He's talking about his words, his actions, a demonstration of what's inside of him in his heart. That's what he's saying is coming out of the man. And he says, "This is what really will defile a man if he's going to be defiled."

So the principle is you have to look at what comes out of your life to know whether you are doing good, whether you're honoring God, what's coming out of your life. And we're not talking about insurance and cars and houses and providing for your family. Those are all good things, but we're talking about what comes out of your heart. What comes out of your heart.

### **The Disciples Didn't Understand *What comes from the heart matters***

You know, not all Christians get it. They just don't get this message. They can't quite understand it. And I want to tell you something. The disciples didn't get it. Okay? No, here it is. Go back to verse 17 with me. "When he had entered a house away from the crowd, his disciples asked him concerning the parable." That means they said, "Lord, we didn't get it. What did you mean by all that? We didn't quite get what you want us to understand." And here's how Jesus answers them. "Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him?"

Now, if, you know, I was through preaching and we were kind of talking in the hallway and you came by and you just said, "Thank you, Pastor. Thank you. You had a wonderful message this morning." And I said, "Well, what did it mean? What was the point? What was the message?" And you say, "Well, actually I didn't get it." And I would look at you and I'd say, "Are you really that spiritually thick-headed? Are you that lacking in understanding? Don't you see what God is saying?" And you're thinking, "Oh, you know, are you really telling me I'm that spiritually dull?" That's what Jesus is saying to his disciples. "What's the matter with you? Where are you in your spiritual understanding?" "Well, I think, Lord, you're going to have to tell me a little bit more because I didn't quite get it."

So he gives us further explanation. He says in verse 20, this is the further explanation now. "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart," see, he's telling them, "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man." I'm not talking about externals. I'm talking about spiritual realities, things that come from your heart, decisions that are made down deep in your heart that you give yourself to that are sin. That's what defiles a man. The central subject is what comes out of the heart. And that means out of the spirit of a man. And that goes down to what are called choices or values. Your choices and your values really tell on you. They tell what kind of Christian life you have.

Look, you could have insurance of every kind for those that you would affect now or when you die. You could have a car and house and clothes and food and every kind of provision for everyone around you that you love. You could work your fingers to the bone and provide the best education, do all the things out there. And really, God would say, "Well, I'm not really interested in that as a judgment of your Christian life. I want to know what's coming from your

heart. What comes from your heart? Lust? Evil thoughts? Evil deeds? I want to see your heart."

I've been reading literature from around the world about tortured Christians. And I frankly, I was reading an article this last week that said how many Christians are tortured every year in the world. And the number was staggering to me. I just have to tell you, at this point in time, I didn't think this number was real. I want you to come up with a number in your mind. How many Christians do you think are tortured in the world every year? Just come up with a number. Between yourself and God. Don't shout it out. Come up with a number in your mind. How many? Because they are Christians. This article went on beyond what I'm calling tortured. They even said are killed. Now, come up with a number of how many you think are killed every year because of their faith in Christ. Now, that's hard for me. I'm not sure that there are very many in the United States at all. You know? Canada, Mexico. In the Western world, I can't envision there being a great many people, I mean killed, because of their faith in Christ. Killed. This article said 100,000 Christians are killed every year because of their faith. That's far beyond anything I could imagine. And then beyond that, those that are tortured in some lesser way, you can multiply that by 5, 10, whatever. Great numbers.

And I learned something from all of that. I learned something from these people. That when their worldly goods are gone, when they're pressed to the place of near starvation, and when they're then told to swear allegiance to a false god and to deny Jesus, the question comes down to this. Do you love Jesus? Do you love him so much that you cannot deny him? Is your heart so committed to him? You know, this is a question that even a child can answer. You don't have to be an adult to answer this question.

And so what these militant groups are doing, they're going to 11, 12, and 13-year-olds primarily. They have a reason for going to children of that age. And they're pressing them on this issue. Will you pledge allegiance to a false god, the god that we worship? Will you deny Jesus? And their reasoning is this. They can have young boys at this age. They can take them and train them for their military actions. And they do. They can take the girls of this age and they put them into what we have to call sexual slavery. So it's a very key age for the boys. They actually make fighting instruments out of them. For the girls, they use them. The numbers come back and they do shock you. Nine out of ten of those that claim that they have received Jesus as their savior, nine out of ten of those children will not swear allegiance to a false god. And they are killed. Children.

They don't serve the purpose of these that want to use them, and so they do away with them. They're shot or they're beheaded. You know, when the stuff of a rich society is gone, and we are a rich society, and when the importance of pleasing the crowd doesn't really matter anymore, when all that matters is do you love Jesus. Do you love Jesus more than lost or money or your possessions or your social approval? Do you love Jesus more than even trying to save your life? Then you can see somebody's true heart. I'm not going to claim, really, I'm not going to claim that everybody at Fellowship Bible Church would die for that. Of course, it's an individual decision. But I'm just trying to give you a realistic view of what some others around the world, hundreds of thousands of others, are being pressed into.

And this isn't any different than it was in the first century and second century of the Church. We're shocked to learn how many tens of thousands, hundreds of thousands of Christians were martyred in the second century. It's just hard to believe. And what a great victory the, I'm going to call it the ecclesiastical liberal concept of what Christianity was. And what a great victory they thought they had in the first third of the 300s when the so-called the emperor of Rome said that he accepted Christ as his God. It just led to an ecclesiastical system that strangled out the message of the gospel. No, there wasn't any more persecution for a long time until eventually the Church turned on anybody that wouldn't surrender to their concepts of worship, especially the Jews, and killed them. How twisted.

We have to come back to the Word of God, to what Jesus teaches, what comes out of your heart. That's how you can know where you are in your Christian life. You can see your true self. Oh Lord, can you say I love you above the world, I love you above the things of the world, and I love you above life itself. Here's my heart. Guide me, teach me. Teach me from your Word, teach me through what you lead me through in the way of experience. Help me to live for you and to live for you and you alone. That's where God wants to bring us. That's why his disciples, you know, if they couldn't understand this, that what's important to the Lord is what comes from your heart.

Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, witchcraft, idolatry, deceit, lewdness, evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness of all kinds. Stuff of the world. Or does your heart, from your heart, there's the question, does from your heart come a sincere, committed, consistent love for the Lord? So that that other stuff doesn't really have much value. One thing that the Lord has used in my life to test me and by which I guess I can say I can test myself is money. I know it's pretty simple, isn't it? But many years ago, I had to come to the place where

money didn't really matter that much to me. As far as, you know, a hunger for it or a desire to amass it. It always mattered to me to be able to eat and to be able to provide and go through, you know, have enough to do all that God wanted me to do.

I can't tell you how happy I was when an optometrist in Crawfordsville, Indiana, committed himself to give me five dollars a week so that I could have gas money. To get around to the Bible clubs that I had to get around to every week. That five dollars would get me around to all the Bible clubs. And I want to tell you, gas was, man, oh, was 17 cents a gallon in those days. So I could go pretty far in five dollars. That was like manna from heaven. And every week, boy, I burned it all up and waited for God to send another five dollars. I learned. I didn't have enough money for more than one meal at what we call the Campus Center, the place where we had the cafeteria. I just couldn't pay for more than one meal. And I had to wash dishes to make that happen. And when I witnessed to those ladies in that kitchen, and they came to me, and they were sweethearts, you know, they had the lady over the salads and had the lady over the desserts, they had the lady over the vegetables and had the lady over the entrees. You know, they all came to me and they said,

"Now, Chuck, we need somebody to test our meals for us. We wonder if you would just -- now, these are the meals we're going to have in the future, you know, we want to know if they're acceptable or should we change the recipe a little bit -- if you would be willing to test them out for us and give us some feedback." And I said, "Oh, yes. Yeah, I would be willing to do that." And these ladies -- yeah, market research, yeah, yeah. These ladies would bring me a tray of food that would feed three people every day. Say, "Now, you've got to come back. You've got to tell us what this -- you know, this is -- you know, we're not just giving you food. We want to know what these things are -- you know, can we serve these things?" And I was always so happy to tell them, you know.

God fed me for two years that way. I never again had to worry about food. Never again had to worry about gas. Touched my mother's heart. You know, she never told my father because he swore he would never give me a penny to help me in my schooling, and he was true to his word. He didn't want my mother to do it, but my mother was going behind his back, I have to tell you, and every week she would write a letter to me, and she would enclose a \$5 bill. And that \$5 bill paid my room rent. My room rent was paid. My meals were taken care of. My gas was taken care of. I learned I didn't have to love money. God was going to take care of me as long as I was faithful to do what he wanted me to do, as long as my life stayed in his hands. And to this day, God has been faithful. So, I

don't care if he makes me the steward of millions of dollars. It just doesn't mean anything to me. It's not mine. [Audience member] So the Bible verse that's in the Bulletin today is really true? Yep. Yep. Your children put their trust under the shadow of your wings. What comes from our heart will tell us what kind of Christian life we live. Where is our love? On stuff or on him? Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, help us get it. Help us understand. Help us get beyond just hearing stories or parables or illustrations and get the message. That you're trying to touch our hearts. Tell us what you're looking for from our hearts. Tell us that you're looking for our love. That anything short of our love, totally given to you, is not enough. Help us to love you with all that we have, with all that we are. In Jesus' name, Amen.