



# Daily Reflections

**September 2, 2018**

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## Scripture

### **Mark 7: 1-23**

When the Pharisees with some scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus, they observed that some of his disciples ate their meals with unclean, that is, unwashed, hands.

—For the Pharisees and, in fact, all Jews, do not eat without carefully washing their hands, keeping the tradition of the elders.

And on coming from the marketplace they do not eat without purifying themselves.

And there are many other things that they have traditionally observed, the purification of cups and jugs and kettles and beds. —

So the Pharisees and scribes questioned him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders but instead eat a meal with unclean hands?"

He responded,

"Well did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written:

This people honors me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me;

in vain do they worship me,

teaching as doctrines human precepts.

You disregard God's commandment but cling to human tradition."

He summoned the crowd again and said to them,

"Hear me, all of you, and understand.  
Nothing that enters one from outside can defile that person;  
but the things that come out from within are what defile.  
"From within people, from their hearts,  
come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder,  
adultery, greed, malice, deceit,  
licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly.  
All these evils come from within and they defile."

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## **Our Scripture Reflection**

Jesus used the word "hypocrite" over and over again for the self-righteous scribes and Pharisees. They really did behave like actors on a stage. They were concerned with external appearances but did little to cleanse their hardened hearts. Even worse, they were not good role models for living genuine faith. Their actions confused and disillusioned the people. Jesus rebukes them sharply in today's Gospel reading with the hope of changing their hearts.

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## **Food for your Journey**

My dad closed the door and flicked off the lights, pitching the room into a clean black. "Goodnight," he said as he walked away. His footsteps receded as he walked downstairs to rejoin my mom. My brother sat up beside the bed.

"Ready?" he asked.

I nodded.

We piled my stuffed animals and realigned my pillows, burying the human-like decoy in a thick comforter. From the doorway, it looked like a body curled up in deep sleep. Perfect.

My brother and I snuck downstairs, our soft footfalls swallowed by explosions and gunshots from an action movie. We opened the basement door and slipped downstairs to my brother's room, where we watched Kung-Fu and R-rated movies, eating chips and dip, until dawn.

I could have asked my parents to sleep downstairs. They would have probably said "Yes" -- it was a Friday and I was almost nine years old. But the thrill of

subterfuge tinged my flight. Breaking rules was liberating, saying "No" was exciting. Doing the "wrong" thing was a thrill.

In his Confessions, Augustine of Hippo tells a similar story. One night, he and his friends sneak into a garden and steal pears. They don't eat the fruit but still enjoy the theft for its sinful pleasure. As he writes, "The malice of the act was base and I loved it -- that is to say, I loved my own undoing, I loved the evil in me."

--Brett, "Augustine and evil," Backyard Philosophy Blog

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## **A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear Jesus, Pour forth Your Grace upon my heart to cleanse it of all sinfulness and impurities. Help me to live the Gospel truly and fully. In doing so may I draw others to You. Amen