

“Make them known”

September 2, 2018

Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

4:1 So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. 4:2 You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the LORD your God with which I am charging you. 4:6 You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, "Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!" 4:7 For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is whenever we call to him? 4:8 And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today? 4:9 But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children—

James 1:17-22 1:17 Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. 1:18 In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures. 1:19 You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; 1:20 for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. 1:21 Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. 1:22 But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves.

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

7:1 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 7:2 they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 7:3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders;

7:4 and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.)

7:5 So 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?" 7:6

He 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; 7:7 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

7:8 You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

7:14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 7:15 there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."

For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come:

fornication, theft, murder, {22} adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. {23} All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

We did well this morning. We entered into a covenant with another family on behalf of another child. We're all acutely aware of what a daunting task it is in these or any days to raise up a child. So many concerns around the clock every day. Nutrition, sleep, cleanliness, emotional bonding and support, protection from outside influences, protection from illness, and so much more. From the day a child is born, parents who know full well where a child's hands can be – and where they will inevitably go – straight in the mouth, have to be vigilant. As they grow, parents could most likely pay for a child's college education if they had a dollar or two for each time they said, 'wash your hands. Are those hands clean.'

Why? Why the fuss? Why the ritual? With all that children have to learn in this world – like walking and talking – why worry about hands?" In from play – wash your hands. Petting the dog – wash those hands. Going to the bathroom – wash those hands. Coming to the table without washing hands – no way. But why? Well for one thing, The Center for Disease Control has a campaign that tells us as we face the whatever possible pandemic of the day might be, flu or otherwise, that the singular best defense is washing one's hands. Not just cursory washing, but a parent standing towering over a child washing every cuticle kind of washing ...with soap.

So is that what had the Pharisees in such a lather. Pun intended. Were they that concerned for the disciples health? God was. Back in the statutes and ordinance days when God gives the law. God knows that like the flowing, cleansing grace of God, washing hands, and all those other ordinances Moses speaks of, can save lives. That yes, just like having to head to the sink before supper or at least pulling out a handy wipe or bottle of hand sanitizer, washing hands, following the rules may be tedious, but it saves lives. So Moses says, 'don't forget these life giving rules you've learned, make them known to your children and your children's children.

That's how it works. It's what we are supposed to do. I promise you Mary didn't let Jesus come to the table without washing his hands. Of course Jesus washed hands, he was a good Jewish child and adult, but Jesus also wanted his followers , his accusers, like these questioning Pharisees, and us, to know higher truths. Things of greater importance. Like hunger trumps ritual, and need was more important than tradition, and grace, even if it was in the form of the law, was more important than law **every** time. Jesus knew that not washing your hands might make you sick and you could die, but washing them 500 times a day to the exclusion of all else, couldn't save your soul.

Jesus' kind of love, thank goodness, saves grubby handed children, and adults who need to be washed clean. Yes, wash hands and **all** the rest,

but to love God with our whole selves before all else and then our neighbors like we love ourselves is much more vital. God wants us to wash our hands to be clean and to live and who knows if we pay enough attention to God we might just wash our hands of intolerance, and wash our hands of greed, and wash our hands of injustice, and wash our hands of war, and wash our hands of prejudice, and wash our hands of hate,....

The message is, even as we are standing here with soap on our hands, that we have all been washed clean by Jesus – that’s what baptism is all about. Baptiso – a greek word, doesn’t mean to immerse as some would have us believe, it means to wash. To wash free from sin. But, do little children sin, some may ask? Ask a parent why they wash their baby’s hands. Ask them why they are insistent with the toddler and 2nd grader and the teenager ‘wash your hands.’ They know where those hands have been.

There’s something to this cleanliness and godliness relationship. Water dripping on the floor, God is with us -- handing each child a towel in turn, sending us refreshed and renewed, covered in grace, and challenged to live out into the world again today. God knows it’s not washing hands that saves us, it’s not a bath, it’s not even baptism, but it is the loving, life giving, freeing, peace perpetuating, soul cleansing grace of Jesus Christ.

So we did well today. We promised not just to talk about ‘the word’ but to be doers of the word. To put our faith into practice. We promise you Meg,

and Chad and Abby, that if you will do your part as you have promised, we will do our part as we have promised for your child and every child. And on a day soon, when she's at LOGOS we'll make sure she washes her hands, too.

And by the way, (take the wipes) it's time to come to the table of grace, let's wash our hands. Kid's?

While we sing "I Come With Joy...."