

First Scripture Reading
Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
from the Common English Bible

¹The Pharisees and some legal experts from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus. ²They saw some of his disciples eating food with unclean hands. (They were eating without first ritually purifying their hands through washing. ³The Pharisees and all the Jews don't eat without first washing their hands carefully. This is a way of observing the rules handed down by the elders. ⁴Upon returning from the marketplace, they don't eat without first immersing themselves. They observe many other rules that have been handed down, such as the washing of cups, jugs, pans, and sleeping mats.) ⁵So the Pharisees and legal experts asked Jesus, "Why are your disciples not living according to the rules handed down by the elders but instead eat food with ritually unclean hands?" ⁶He replied, "Isaiah really knew what he was talking about when he prophesied about you hypocrites. He wrote, *This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far away from me.* ⁷*Their worship of me is empty since they teach instructions that are human words.* ⁸You ignore God's commandment while holding on to rules created by humans and handed down to you." ¹⁴Then Jesus called the crowd again and said, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand. ¹⁵Nothing outside of a person can enter and contaminate a person in God's sight; rather, the things that come out of a person contaminate the person." ²¹"It's from the inside, from the human heart, that evil thoughts come: sexual sins, thefts, murders, ²²adultery, greed, evil actions, deceit, unrestrained immorality, envy, insults, arrogance, and foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from the inside and contaminate a person in God's sight."

This is the word of God for the people of God.

Thanks be to God.

Psalm Reading
15
from the UMH, 747

¹O Lord, who shall abide in your tent? Who shall dwell in your holy hill?

²The one who walks blamelessly, and does what is right, and speaks truth from the heart...

³who does not slander with the tongue, and does no evil to a friend, nor takes up a reproach against a neighbor...

⁴in whose eyes a reproach is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord...

⁵who does not put out money at interest, and does not take a bribe against the innocent.

The one who does these things shall never be moved.

Second Scripture Reading

James 1:17-27

from the Common English Bible

¹⁷Every good gift, every perfect gift, comes from above. These gifts come down from the Father, the creator of the heavenly lights, in whose character there is no change at all. ¹⁸He chose to give us birth by his true word, and here is the result: we are like the first crop from the harvest of everything he created. ¹⁹Know this, my dear brothers and sisters: everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to grow angry. ²⁰This is because an angry person doesn't produce God's righteousness.

²¹Therefore, with humility, set aside all moral filth and the growth of wickedness, and welcome the word planted deep inside you - the very word that is able to save you. ²²You must be doers of the word and not only hearers who mislead themselves. ²³Those who hear but don't do the word are like those who look at their faces in a mirror. ²⁴They look at themselves, walk away, and immediately forget what they were like. ²⁵But there are those who study the perfect law, the law of freedom, and continue to do it. They don't listen and then forget, but they put it into practice in their lives. They will be blessed in whatever they do. ²⁶If those who claim devotion to God don't control what they say, they mislead themselves. Their devotion is worthless. ²⁷True devotion, the kind that is pure and faultless before God the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their difficulties and to keep the world from contaminating us.