Nov 8, 2026 – Questions to Discuss and Consider at Home or in Small Group

“Clean from the Inside Out” – Mark 7:9-16

1. **(Mark 7:9–13):** How did the Pharisees use the religious vow of *Corban* as a legal loophole to bypass God’s Fifth Commandment? What are modern, respectable loopholes we use in our own culture (e.g., intense career busyness, corporate compliance, religious activity) to justify withholding sacrificial time, care, and financial honor from our families?

2. **Tradition vs. Traditionalism:** Historian Jaroslav Pelikan famously wrote, *"Tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living."* How does this distinction help us value historical creeds, confessions, and biblical rhythms without weaponizing human customs to bind consciences above Scripture?

3. **(Mark 7:14–15):** Why is Jesus' declaration that defilement is *inside-out* rather than *outside-in* so offensive to human nature? In what ways do we still instinctively treat spiritual purity as an issue of external contamination (media diets, peer groups, cultural filters) rather than addressing the native desires of our own hearts?

4. **(Mark 7:15 vs. James 1:27):** How does Jesus’ teaching harmonize with James’ command to keep oneself *"unstained by the world"*? How does defining "the world" as an anti-God system of autonomous pride—rather than physical matter or secular workplaces—protect us from fear-based cultural bunkerism?

5. How does "resume-righteousness" or procedural rule-keeping operate as a defense mechanism to protect our root idol of **Autonomy (Self-Justification)**? What is the personal and relational cost (anxiety, coldness, burnout, defensiveness) when we live on that perfectionistic treadmill?

6. **(Mark 10:45; Hebrews 13:12–13):** Unlike human traditions that used vows to withhold love and protect self-interest, how is Jesus Christ the true and ultimate *Corban*? What does it mean for your daily assurance that the spotless Son of God suffered "outside the camp" to bear the judgment of your inward pollution?

7. John Owen warned that attempting to kill sin through checklists only trades obvious sins for spiritual pride. What is the practical difference between white-knuckling external rules and mortifying sin "by the Spirit" (Colossians 3:1–5; Romans 8:13) through the power of our union with Christ?

8. Because Christ has settled your record before the Father and cleansed your heart at the subterranean source, what is one concrete area this week where you get to lay down self-protecting fear and practice self-giving love (e.g., in eldercare, marriage, parenting, or workplace integrity)?

- God's holy design establishes that external things cannot **defile** a person; true moral and spiritual reality is determined by the condition of the **inward heart** before Him.
- Our fallen nature devises elaborate systems of **external management** to avoid what might defile us, all while we protect our **idols** and keep our corrupted hearts hidden and unaddressed.
- Jesus Christ exposed our false religious systems and suffered **outside the camp**—though He did nothing to defile Himself, He bore our **judgment** as our substitute to give us a brand-new, **cleansed heart** through His blood.
- Because Christ bore our inward corruption, we are now free from the **paranoid fear** of what might externally defile us, empowered to trade hypocritical legalism for a life that genuinely understands and reflects **God's heart**.