



# BREAKING OPEN THE WORD

August 29, 2021

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time

Lectionary: 125

**Gospel Mk 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23**

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 market place, 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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**Spiritual Reflection:** The German Minister Dietrich Bonhoeffer once wrote: “If you board the wrong train, it is no use running along the corridor in the other direction.” If we are on the train driven by our ego we will end up going in the wrong direction and there is no excuse that will re-route that train. We must choose to get off our ego driven train and get on to God’s train.

**Spiritual Questions:**

1. Name your favorite sin and now name what you must do in order to avoid that sin.
2. Why is it hard to avoid sin?
3. How does practicing virtue lead to practicing more virtue?
4. Why do people try to blame their circumstances instead of addressing the real issue?
5. What lead you into temptation?