

## Nurturing Faith... Every Day in Every Way



September 2, 2018

Song of Solomon 2:8-13

Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9

James 1:17-27

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



### Clean or Unclean?

*Object: Disposable gloves, sanitary wipes, a bottle of hand sanitizer*

One day recently I went into a sandwich shop for lunch. As I watched the young man behind the counter making my sandwich, I noticed he was wearing disposable gloves like these. (Hold up the disposable gloves for the children to see.) I thought to myself, "That's good. I'm glad he isn't making my sandwich using his dirty hands." As I watched, the young man handled everything behind the counter wearing those same gloves. After a while, I began to wonder, "Are those gloves any cleaner than his hands would be?"

People today are very concerned about having clean hands. Since soap and water might not always be available, many people carry packages of these handy disposable sanitary wipes or perhaps a small bottle of hand sanitizer to make sure that their hands are clean. That is a really good idea. After all, as my mother used to say, "Cleanliness is next to godliness." Or is it?

One day, a group of Pharisees came to Jesus. "We have noticed that some of your disciples are eating without washing their hands" they told Jesus. "Why don't they follow our tradition of washing their hands before they eat?"

"You bunch of phonies!" Jesus answered. "Isaiah must have been talking about you when he said, 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.'"

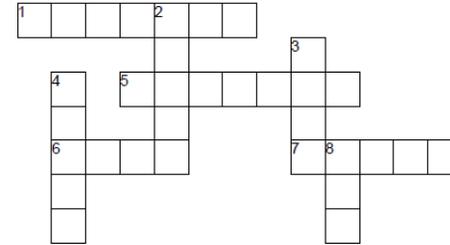
Then Jesus called the people to gather around and listen to what he had to say. "All of you listen. It's not what goes into your body that makes you unclean, it is the bad words that come out of your mouth. Out of your hearts come evil thoughts, greed, cheating, and envy. This is what makes you unclean."

The people of Jesus' day were more concerned about having clean hands than they were about having a clean heart. Are we any different? We wear disposable gloves and use handy wipes and hand sanitizing lotion, but do we guard our hearts against evil thoughts? What kind of books do we read? What kind of TV shows and movies do we watch? What kind of language comes out of our mouth?

Clean hands, or a clean heart, which is more important?

Gracious God. Help us to be careful of the words that come out of our mouths. Help us to use our words to be nice to others and to speak words of encouragement. Create in us clean hearts to honor you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

## Crossword Puzzle



### ACROSS

- To express love and adoration toward God
- Something that is dirty or soiled
- The two edges of flesh around the mouth
- The center of your emotion, I love you with all my \_\_\_\_\_.

### DOWN

- The body part at the end of the arms that includes the fingers
- To make something clean using soap and water
- The accepted way that things should be done
- To take food into the mouth, chew it, and swallow

LIPS  
HEART

EAT  
WORSHIP

WASH  
HANDS

UNCLEAN  
RULES

**CLEAN HANDS AND HEARTS SNACK:** Provide a bottle of liquid hand sanitizer for the children to clean their hands before eating a heart-shaped cookie.

### Family Table Prayer for September

Thank you for the earth so sweet.  
Thank you for the food we eat.  
Thank you for the birds that sing.  
Thank you, God, for everything!

**September Memory Verse:** Rejoice in the Lord always! Again, I say rejoice!  
~ Philippians 4:4

# MAR 7:6

