



FOOTHILLS COMMUNITY CHURCH | LIFE NOTES

ENCOUNTERS: WEEK 6

SYNOPSIS OF SERIES

Jesus changed the world forever. What he did 2000 years ago in 3 years of ministry is impossible to ignore. What made Jesus so unique? What was it about him that led people to drop everything to follow him? Over the next few weeks we are going to be looking deeply at the book of Mark. We want to invite you and group to take a look at some of the most profound Jesus encounters recorded in Scripture. My prayer is that you would encounter Jesus in a new and fresh way.

GETTING STARTED

What has surprised you about Jesus in studying the book of Mark?

What does your time with God look like?

How often are you able to sit down and read Scripture?

DIGGING DEEPER

Read Mark 7:1-5

One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. ²They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. ³(The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions.) ⁴Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.) ⁵So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, “Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony.”

On Sunday, Kyle talked in depth about fences. A fence is something that we build into our lives to encourage us to honor God's law. For example, Ephesians 4:29 says, “do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouth...” So, you might choose to avoid movies with bad language as a fence in your life.

What are some fences that you have in your life?

How have these been helpful in leading you toward holiness?

What are some of the pitfalls that can come from someone imposing their personal fences on others?

How are you/have you judging/judged others by your fences?

Read Mark 7:6-8

⁶ Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, 'These people honor me with their lips but their hearts are far from me. ⁷ Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.' ⁸ For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition."

Jesus was not really fond of the Pharisees imposing their fences on others primarily because they were being hypocrites. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be something that they are not, someone who wears a mask.

As you hear Jesus' words, what's your reaction?

In what ways do you tend to be hypocritical?

Who in your life will speak the truth to you? Who is helping you to see your blind spots?

Read Mark 7:9-13

⁹ Then he said, "You skillfully sidestep God's law in order to hold on to your own tradition. ¹⁰ For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death. ¹¹ But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you. ¹² In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. ¹³ And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others."

Back during this time, there was a practice called Corban. The word literally means "offering" and it meant that a person could dedicate something to God for his exclusive use. So, someone could practice Corban and take money that would have been spent somewhere else and dedicate it to God. However, some people including Pharisees would practice Corban, but then use the money however they wished. They would take money that would have otherwise gone to support their parents, claim Corban and then use the money as they wished (not really giving it to God as pledged).

This was a loophole that the Pharisees used in order to get out of taking care of their parents.

Loopholes are dangerous because we can use them to justify behavior that is not honoring to God.

What are some examples of this?

If you are brave, describe a time when you took advantage of a loophole that looking back was not honoring to God

Moving Forward

Imposing fences, wearing masks and finding loopholes are all indicators that our hearts are in need of some work. This will always be the case until Jesus returns because we are fleshly and sinful. Praise God that he has sent Jesus to give us grace even in the midst of our sin.

Prayer

Pray with one another and ask for forgiveness where God is showing you areas of sin.