

Mark 7:1-8, 14, 15, 21-23 Jesus Teaches about Inner Purity

7 One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. ² They 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. ⁴ Similarly, 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.)

⁵ So 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.”

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.”

¹⁴ Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “All of you listen,” he said, “and try to understand. ¹⁵ It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.”

²¹ For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³ All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.” NLT



BENEFICE SERVICE

Sunday 29th August at Highampton Church
An informal Evening Service on the theme of **HOLIDAYS**.
Please bring holiday souvenirs and stories from this or previous years, or hopes for the future.
Bring your own picnic and a chair. 5.30 pm Picnic, 6.30 pm Service

Thank you from St Mary's, Black Torrington

We held a very successful 'Pudd-ring' on Thursday evening in the Church
Thank you to everyone who supported the evening.
A total of £180.40 was raised towards the hand bell repairs.
THANK YOU

*The United Benefice of Ashwater, Beaworthy, Black Torrington,
Clawton, Halwill, Highampton and Tetcott*
Sunday 29th August

13th Sunday after Trinity

WELCOME TO WORSHIP

9.30 am Holy Communion, Ashwater Church
11.00 am Holy Communion, Halwill Church
6.30 pm Benefice Festival Service, Highampton Church



Readings

Deuteronomy 4: 1-2, 6-9
James 1, 17-27
Mark 7: 1-8, 14, 15, 21-23

Collect

Almighty God,
you search us and know us:
may we rely on you in strength
and rest on you in weakness,
now and in all our days;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Interim Priest-in-Charge (part time)

Rev'd Stephen Skinner
sjmskinners@btinternet.com
07554 142264

PLEASE PRAY FOR:

The Mission Community: for all who live and work in our Mission Community

All who are mourning the death of a loved one including the family of Les Friend (*Beaworthy*), John Plummer (*Black Torrington*), Rachel Gilbert (*Black Torrington*), Steve Bridges (*Black Torrington*)

Rest in peace all who have recently died including Rachel Gilbert and Steve Bridges

Those who are ill or in any kind of need and those who are vulnerable due to underlying health conditions, including Trevor May, Bryan Hancock, Grace Spelman, Mavis Watson, Peter and Maureen Ellis, Malcolm and Judith Lusted, Jenny Hyslop, Brian Colebrook-Clark, Tim Kirk

For peace in the world, praying especially for the people of Afghanistan.

Dates for your diary

Tuesday 31st August	11.00 am	ZOOM Bible Study
Wednesday 1st September	10.00 am	Morning Prayer Black Torrington Church
	10.30 am	PCC Meeting, Black Torrington Church
	1.30 pm	Private Funeral, Black Torrington Church
	2.30 pm	Living in Love and Faith Hope Chapel, Black Torrington
Thursday 2nd September	2.30 pm	Ashwater PCC Meeting
	8.00 pm	ZOOM Compline
Friday 3rd September	10.00 am	Said Morning Prayer Beaworthy Church
Sunday 5th September	9.30 am	Holy Communion Ashwater Church
	11.00 am	Holy Communion Halwill Church
	11.00 am	Café Church Black Torrington Church
	3.00 pm	Luffincott & Tetcott Walk, Service & Picnic

Meeting ID:

317 183 8102

Passcode: 848984



**Thought for Sunday 29th August 2021
13th Sunday after Trinity**

“DO WE NEED TO WASH OUR HANDS?”

One of the first things that the Government told us at the beginning of the Covid19 Pandemic was to wash our hands very thoroughly, for 20 seconds, using proper soap and a hand dryer. I know that I have been far more careful about keeping my hands clean whenever I’ve been ‘out and about’. For example I clean my hands with sanitiser after I’ve used the cash dispensers at banks, or handle coins! Some might consider this a little obsessive – but my mantra about this is “Better safe than Sorry!” I can recall times when I might well have caught an illness through failing to keep my hands clean – one particularly bad episode was in Zanzibar!!

Our Gospel reading for this weekend begins with a story about Jesus’ disciples failing to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. The Pharisees had numerous rules, as set out in what is called the Jewish ‘Mishnah’. It was a serious matter, because they assumed that their hands were always unclean! So, unless they were washed, they could convey a lesser grade of uncleanness to foods and offerings, thus rendering their offerings invalid! The Pharisees debated at length what kind of washing was needed, and how much water was necessary. Thus Jesus was challenged – would he censure his disciples or be complicit in breaking laws of ritual purity and holiness?

Jesus swung back at the Pharisees and immediately labelled them as hypocrites! He was very sensitive to the dangers of religious hypocrisy, and so must we be – starting with ourselves!

Jesus made a key point in his response – and its one we need to take to heart also: “Its not what goes into your body that defiles you, but you are defiled by what comes from your heart!”. These words are well worth pondering. Righteousness is a matter of the heart, thought, will, desires, priorities and speech. As one Commentator writes: “We cannot shift the blame for our inherent sinfulness, failures and shortcomings on to external influences as much as we would like”. A lot of our innate moral shortcomings stem from the ‘old nature’, which we must invite the Holy Spirit to transform. My Sermons this Sunday will help us to avoid the charge of being labelled “Hypocrites”, whether over our hand washing, or any other practical or moral; issues of daily life!

Stephen