

Do a good deed for the Father's eyes only.

Deut. 4:1-2, 6-8

Psalm 15:2-5

James 1:17-18, 21-22, 27
23

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

Moses teaches the people the Lord's statutes and decrees and emphasizes they must be observed carefully and they are not to add or subtract from them. These guides will aid them in being a truly wise and intelligent people who give evidence of wisdom.

The Psalmist instructs us to walk blamelessly and accept no bribe. We are not to slander anyone and always think the truth in our hearts. If we also honor those who fear the Lord and never harm our fellow man we shall never be disturbed.

James tells the brothers and sisters in faith that we are a kind of first fruits of God's creatures. The Father of light gives us birth by the word of truth and we are to humbly welcome this word. We are to be doers of the word and keep ourselves unstained and help those in need.

The Pharisees observe the disciples breaking with certain traditions and question Jesus about it. Jesus responds that they are teaching as doctrines things that are human precepts. It is what comes from within the heart that can defile and he warns of evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, malice, deceit, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, and folly.

**The Father of lights has given us
Jesus, the Word of Truth.**

The Holy Spirit helps us to be doers of the Lord's words.

Today's readings emphasize that we are to be doers and not simply hearers of the word. This means more than simply obeying all the rules and implies we are to act compassionately and lovingly towards other people; it is a lot easier to be simply legalistic and hard-hearted about it all. Search your heart and weed out those attitudes and behaviors that can harm your spiritual life as well as that of others.

The religious leaders held fast to traditions that Jesus said lacked good common sense, and with very few words he confronted them with the truth. Through false standards, disguised as religious traditions, the Pharisees could look down on others from their "superior righteousness." The Pharisee praying in the temple "thanked God for not being like other men," and this simple statement makes the snobbish attitude even more obvious. Their vision was quite restricted and in the gospel time the word Pharisee meant separate and they attributed to themselves a false sense of superiority.



The ordinary people were attracted to Jesus who had no aristocratic background and while he was of the lineage of David, he came from a poor working class environment. He could relate to them with simple stories that carried a good punch line. Most likely religious leaders who could not relate to downtrodden folk saw him as uneducated upstart from a nothing kind of small town. There were at least three occasions where the crowd wanted to crown Jesus but he clearly rejected any such appeals. He even urged obedience to civil powers and the priests of the times but cautioned them about the difference in listening to what they said and what they actually did. In other words, he urged discernment, a power to see what may not be obvious at first glance.