

Going Deeper-22nd Sunday (Year B)

Scripture

The readings this weekend are:

- + Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-8
- + James 1:17-18, 21-22 & 27
- + Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

Pure Religion

In the Gospel of Mark chapter 7, Jesus rebukes the Pharisees for their hypocritical ways. He quotes Isaiah to them in verse 6 and 7 clearly pointing the finger at them.

“These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.”

It's very easy to think of the Pharisees as bad people and that we would never be like them but the truth is that we can be exactly like them! It may not be the ritualistic handwashing or Pharisaic traditions that we follow but how many of us do things because people are watching us, but in our hearts, we are far from God?

Social media is the perfect example of this artificial way of life. Many platforms encourage us to filter and edit content to show a very specific, curated side of ourselves to friends and family. We can rack up likes and shares without ever actually needed to be vulnerable and show our true selves. As more and more people begin to push back and dismantle a culture that Pope Francis warns leads to separation from others rather than the connection it claims to provide, we can apply this way of thinking to our spiritual lives as well.

The verses from James are a huge challenge to us. What we read in Scripture should live out in our actions. Our 'religion' should not just look good it should be effective, pure and faultless. What filters have we placed on our lives? Are we conscious of editing ourselves to appear one way while still acting another?