2026-11-08 Discussion Questions

The sermon describes the Pharisees as 'stage actors' who honored God with their lips while their hearts were far from him — in what areas of your own life might you be performing religion outwardly while your heart remains distant from God?

Jesus declared in Mark 7 that it is what comes out of a person, not what goes in, that makes them unclean — how does the list of things he named as coming from the heart, such as pride, deceit, and envy, challenge your understanding of what spiritual cleanliness actually requires?

The pastor described a tension between 'the son of Dennis' and 'the son of Jesus' within himself — how do you personally experience that internal tug-of-war between your natural self and who God is calling you to become?

The sermon warns that we have a tendency to 'let go of the commands of God and hold on to the traditions of men' — what habits, preferences, or cultural norms in your own life might be quietly displacing what God has clearly commanded?

The pastor suggested that Christians in hardship are often more spiritually vibrant than those whose lives are comfortable — why do you think prosperity can sometimes pull a person further from God rather than closer to him?

The sermon uses Operation Christmas Child as an example of creative, gospel-centered generosity toward people we will never meet — what does sacrificial giving to strangers reveal about the condition of our hearts, and where might God be calling you to give more freely?

The pastor referenced 1 Thessalonians 5 and the idea that giving thanks in all circumstances is described as God's will for us — how does gratitude in difficult seasons function as an act of trust, and where do you find that hardest to practice?

The sermon draws a parallel between the Pharisees seeking public

recognition through ceremonial washing and modern tendencies to perform faith for an audience — in what ways might the desire to appear holy actually become a barrier to genuine holiness?

The pastor referenced Psalm 51 and David's broken and contrite response after being confronted by Nathan — what does David's willingness to be fully exposed before God teach us about what true repentance looks like, and how does that differ from simply feeling guilty?

The sermon closes with the observation that 'we have conformed Christianity to our lives instead of our lives becoming conformed to Christianity' — what would it look like practically for you to reverse that pattern in one specific area of your life this week?