

Mark



Lesson 8-Religious Tradition vs. Commandments, sin, and Healings Focus: Mark 7:1-37

1. Some Pharisees and scribes came along to see what Jesus was up to (v.1-4)

- a. As these religious leaders of the day came along to see Jesus and His disciples, they managed to “find fault” with their way of eating things. **It’s not good for anyone of us to go around “fault-finding” other people either.** The Bible says, **“Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged: and with what measure you measure, it shall be measured to you again”** (Matthew 7:1,2). **Now, it’s perfectly okay to call sin by its right name and to realize what a sinful behavior is. HOWEVER, we are not to make ourselves the final judge of someone.** We do not know a person’s full heart, mind, or struggles.—**God will be the judge.** We may be **fruit inspectors** though, as Jesus says, **“You shall know them by their fruits”** (Matthew 7:16,20). **We can notice** whether or not the fruits of the Spirit are evident, or whether or not things are happening rightly. Sometimes it may be hard not to notice. **BUT, we are NOT to go looking for some wrongs in others,** that we might just point out and dwell upon. **KEEP your eyes on Jesus, and remember we must all strive to be like HIM and to pray for one another’s souls** (not to go around condemning others, while comparing ourselves to them all).
- b. **The Pharisees had “many traditions”** which were man-made. They followed these things religiously and thought it a sin if someone else did not follow these same **traditions**. However, the word of God, had said **NOTHING** about such things as these!! (v.4)

2. As the Pharisees found fault with their broken “tradition,” Jesus pointed out what “true sin” really was—a broken commandment of God (for which they were guilty) (v.5-13)

- a. **How did Jesus feel about people breaking or ignoring God’s commandments** (to merely keep the traditions of men)? If we knowingly follow some religious tradition while breaking the commandments of God, will Jesus be happy about that? (ref. James 4:17). **Is Jesus “the same yesterday, today, and forever”** (Hebrews 13:8)? _____
- b. Knowingly breaking one of God’s Ten Commandments is a sin; it is a heart-problem.
- c. **Jesus quoted from the Ten Commandments** (v.10-13). These men had been dishonoring the commandments of God by their tradition. Keep in mind again, these guys are supposed to be the religious and spiritual leaders of the day. They had been to all the schools and everything—and yet, they had learned to teach the traditions of men, while ignoring the commandments of God. Be very careful what you choose to follow—Is it according to God’s commandments or men’s popular ideas? **Jesus feels the same about any one of His commandments that has been dishonored or ignored by the traditions of men—that would include the “7th day Sabbath” commandment to rest and keep this day holy—**(the very one which many have dishonored by false religious traditions from early compromises made in the church of Rome; and also by selfish personal neglect of the Sabbath’s holiness). **We should be sure that our lives are in harmony with the true commandment of God (and not merely the religious tradition of men)!** The Roman Church’s decision at the Council of Trent (1559-1563AD) was wrong according to Jesus Christ—our Savior! (They placed “tradition” above the Bible).

3. Jesus tells us that sin and defilement arise from the thoughts, heart, and actions of our own selves (v.14-16).

(It’s a choice we’ve made). Defilement does not just come upon us because of something from outside (like some dirt) entering into our body. **Jesus boldly and openly condemned these traditions of men.** (He did not want people to confuse men’s false ideas with what “true religion” really was).

4. The disciples of Jesus asked Him for clarification upon his teaching about defilement (v.17-23)

- a. **Jesus points out that sinful thoughts (and the actions) come from within the heart!** If the heart is pure and true to God, then the actions will be also! **“For a good tree brings forth good fruit...and a good man out of the good treasure of his heart, brings forth good things...”** (Matthew 7:17; 12:35). **“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”** (Matthew 5:8). Jesus teachings very clearly against the sinful tendencies of men (and he uses a number of specific examples of sinful thought and action—we should be careful to repent of these sins, and ask Jesus for the cleansing of our souls—1 John 1:9). These are the things that truly defile men (not just some kind of dirt getting onto our food!).

5. **It should be noted here: The NIV Bible makes a terrible translation of verse 19.** *They teach a false doctrine by the words put into brackets here. Jesus did NOT “declare all foods clean” in this passage!!! The Bible distinguishes between two kinds of meats—clean animals and unclean animals. Unclean animals may not be eaten. The Bible’s dietary laws are made very clear in Leviticus 11 and Deuteronomy 14. Some people have thought perhaps the dietary laws about animal meat were changed at the cross. However, that is not true! (They are still the same, and we must still follow them). Jesus did not reverse them here, or anywhere else. We can see this for the following reasons:*
- a. KJV and NKJV Bibles read “purging all meats” and “purifying all foods” (respectively). In context of the verse, it means the action of food going through our body cleanses and dumps out any dust or useless material.
 - b. **If Jesus had actually said NOT to keep the dietary laws to God** (or that He was making a change to them), **there would have been an uproar among the disciples and a whole line of questioning to follow** (however, this is not there. So, obviously the disciples did not understand His words that way at all).
 - c. The difference between clean and unclean animals existed clear back to before the flood of Noah (Long before the Jewish nation ever came around) (See Genesis 7:1,2; 8:20; 9:1-4)—After the flood, Noah was given permission to eat the animals, but **not the blood** of the animals (fat, or the unclean ones). God had made a difference between them.
 - d. **God says in Isaiah that those who knowingly break** His command about the abstinence from unclean meats **will perish at the Second Coming of Christ** (See Isaiah 66:15-17; 2 Thess. 1:7-10).
 - e. **The apostle Peter** (who heard these words of Jesus) **was still very much against the eating of unclean meats in the N.T.** (See Acts 10:10-17). Peter saw a vision from God which used unclean animals to illustrate a point. He would never eat something “common or unclean” and he “wondered...what the vision...should mean” (v.17). God taught him not to call “any **MAN** common or unclean” (Acts 10:28). It had nothing to do with actually eating unclean meats—a thing which Peter, the apostle of Christ—heartily protested against. Later, in Acts 15 an early church council was called, in which it was determined that New converts to the Christian faith did not need to be circumcised or to keep the related “Law of Moses.” (Acts 15:5). **Dietary laws** such as “abstaining” from the “eating of blood” were fully upheld—Christians were told to live by these (v.20). The Jewish leaders raged against the early Christian leaders for saying that Baptism replaced the need for circumcision—there was much controversy about it (1 Cor. 7:19; Galatians 5:6,11; Colossians 2:11,12). However, no such controversy ever existed about the Dietary laws.
6. **Jesus brings healing to the Syrophenician woman’s devil-possessed daughter (v.24-30)** *Jesus here tested her faith by His comments. He used the comparison of “little dogs” (v.27), or puppies in this passage. It was not as degrading of a statement as some might take it to be. The woman was not disheartened by Jesus’ statement. She responded without “missing a beat.” Christ’s statement here also makes reference to the focus of Christ’s 3 ½ year ministry mission (this was prophesied in Daniel 9:24-25; this time period was specifically focus upon reaching and reviving the Jewish nation, so that they would fulfill their purpose in reaching all the Gentile nations).*
7. **Jesus makes the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak (v.31-37)** *Christ here made a natural type of remedy. He formed some mud and placed that upon the man, thus using it as part of His work in healing. Jesus could have simply stated for the man to be healed by divine power, with no other type of action applied. However, **Jesus wants us to see the value of His lesson; Simple human effort and natural remedy, combined with divine power, is a worthy and good way for us to operate.** God does not need to do all the work miraculously, when He has fully enabled us already to do something physically. Let us combine our humble efforts together with His! Jesus has “done all things well” (v.37) and we could stand to learn from Him daily!!*

Question (s) for the Heart:

Is it your desire to follow the commandments of God rather than the mere traditions of men? _____ (and to work together with God, as He has enabled us to do)