

Mark 7

Read Mark 7:1-23: Only the Devil would promote the virtues of hand washing over salvation and personal well-being. The same philosophical subterfuge is happening today. We have all of these new *virtual values* that are held above the fundamentals of faith and family. It is now *form over function*. It is the imagined world views as opposed to reality. Imagine God's frustration with religion posing as faith and love for God.

This chapter is a classic case of manmade oral traditions displacing the simple scriptural truths which was causing consternation to sincere seekers. We hear over and over about *Christian hypocrites*. That is religion, not faith. Today, the Jews have oral traditions from the Mishna, Gamara, the Talmud and the Midrash, which are Rabbinic rules...not scripture. They are supposedly *about* scripture, but they invariably accomplish the opposite. The Pharisees were introduced to re-acquaint the Jews with their language, culture and their God. That was a noble intention, but they found themselves becoming *religious police* more than *servants* to the masses.

Jesus is telling these guys who felt like they had to *dumb down* the scriptures to keep people from accidentally breaking the Law...just don't do that! "You guys are telling them to do the wrong things!" It is exactly like the Catholics used to say about keeping the unlearned masses from confusing the scriptures. Latin was substituted for the spoken language. The Jews and the Catholics are notorious for declaring things to be sacred that God has not said are sacred. Jesus is the only mediator between God and man. Not Mary. Not Rabbi Hillel. The people do not need a *fence* around the scriptures. The *experts* were the ones who were misunderstanding the bible. There is no such thing as Pope infallibility. Those who desired to frame the scriptures injected their own misunderstandings in the process.

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. ² For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. ³ For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. ⁴ For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. (Romans 10)

God's word is living; which means that it is individually impactful as applicable.

Jesus had to keep saying "You have heard it said, but I tell you..."... That is because the bible got pushed to the side, and these endless oral tradition add-ons and loopholes were added to the faith journey. God is clearly against *messing with* his word. Just present it plainly. Do not inject yourself into it.

² You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. (Deuteronomy 4)

Moreover, once the Jews felt that they had the right to inject into the Law, they took the opportunity to make exceptions that suit them. A lot of idolatry is not necessarily the abandonment of God. It often is the injection of nonsense to add to scripture. These religious leaders were majoring in minors, making self-serving interpretations.

Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, ² saying: “The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. ³ Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. ⁴ For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. ⁵ But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. ⁶ They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷ greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, ‘Rabbi, Rabbi.’ ⁸ But you, do not be called ‘Rabbi’; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. ⁹ Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. ¹⁰ And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. ¹¹ But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. ¹² And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. ¹³ “But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. ¹⁴ Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. ¹⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. ¹⁶ “Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.’ ¹⁷ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? ¹⁸ And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.’ ¹⁹ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? ²⁰ Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. ²¹ He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. ²² And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. ²³ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving

the others undone.²⁴ Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!²⁵ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence.²⁶ Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also.²⁷ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness.²⁸ Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.²⁹ “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous,³⁰ and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’³¹ “Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets.³² Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt.³³ Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?³⁴ Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city,³⁵ that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar.³⁶ Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. (Matthew 23)

Jesus has to call out poor practices; one after another. Do not hold out on helping your parents to keep your tithe flowing. Do not think that holy food makes you holy. It’s about your intentions and desires; not the imagery.

Read Mark 7:24-37: Jesus used a total outsider to demonstrate that anyone can connect with God. Desperation is only evidence of intent. This woman was from an idol-worshipping culture; but she was in need of emergency assistance. Her daughter was demon-possessed, and her gods had not been helpful. Now it is no longer a casual choice. Jesus reminded her that he was sent to minister to the Jews. She said, indeed, but she would be willing to take *anything* just by being in the right place at the right time. Jesus exorcised the demon out of her daughter. The point is that God will bless all who exert enough energy and intent to push expectations aside and get ahold of God personally.

Surely you shall call a nation you do not know, And nations who do not know you shall run to you, Because of the LORD your God, And the Holy One of Israel; For He has glorified you.”⁶ Seek the LORD while He may be found, Call upon Him while He is near. (Isaiah 55)

Next, Jesus heals a deaf-mute. It is interesting that the people who connected with Jesus required a certain level of desperation. The wealthy and healthy had no sense of urgency or interest in such things. Jesus meets the cripples and demon possessed to find people who have nothing to lose.

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. ²⁷ But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; ²⁸ and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, ²⁹ that no flesh should glory in His presence. ³⁰ But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God—and righteousness and sanctification and redemption— ³¹ that, as it is written, “He who glories, let him glory in the LORD.” (1 Corinthians 1)

Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled. (Matthew 5)

¹² So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, “Do you know what I have done to you? ¹³ You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them. (John 13)