

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 26TH–27TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

TRADITIONS (MARK 7:1–13) THE RELIGIOUS HIT MEN

Again, we have religious leaders following Jesus around to watch for something to criticize. This time, they discovered that Jesus and His disciples did not ceremonially wash their hands before eating.

- Ceremonial handwashing was not biblical or even a law; it was just a religious tradition.

TRADITIONS BECAME THE MAIN FOCUS

Traditions became more valued than biblical commands, and many Jews found their identities in them. In Christianity, many man-made traditions take precedence over biblical truths.

- **Not all tradition is bad, but tradition must be secondary and not contradict Scripture.**

THEY HAD BECOME ISOLATIONISTS

Handwashing had nothing to do with hygiene. It was symbolic of washing the Gentile off oneself because Gentiles were “unclean” people.

- **Christians are not called to isolate.** God loves and desires to save all people. **He also wants us to love and build relationships with those who do not know Him.**

“YOU HYPOCRITES”

Jesus responds to the Pharisees with a blunt rebuke. He quotes Isaiah 29, stating that they had become hypocrites because **they acted pious, but their hearts were far from God.**

- **They thought checking off a list would save their souls**, but their motives and true commitment to God were lacking.

SELECTIVE OBEDIENCE

Jesus said they are “invalidating God’s command in order to set up...tradition.” They would also use Scripture to negate Scripture.

- Similarly, **we often use Scripture to get out of obeying inconvenient Scripture.** Jesus condemns such misuse by exposing that **this misses the point of true faith.**

CORBAN

Jesus used *corban*, the temple holding money in order to avoid taking care of one’s elderly parents (*laundering?*), as an example of using tradition to negate God’s commands.

- The bottom line is **the Bible is infallible, the standard by which we’re to live, and should be honored with a willing heart.**

MOTIVE & HEART (MARK 7:14–23)

GET RIGHT TO THE POINT

Jesus called the crowd to gather around so He could assure them the source of godly living comes from the heart (inside), not our outward actions or appearances.

- We often think action will make us holy, but **if the heart is not dedicated to Christ, actions lack meaning and power.**

NOTHING THAT ENTERS DEFILES US?

Jesus is specifically referring to dietary laws. This is not a license to be unhealthy, foolish, or to do whatever we please. The point is the **motive and heart** behind what we do.

- Jesus assures us that **what we consume with our eyes, mind, and heart can defile us** (Matthew 6) and we should use wisdom.

“THUS HE DECLARED ALL FOODS CLEAN”

The OT dietary restrictions served a purpose. They protected the Jews, taught symbolic separation from sin, and distinguished the people of God from non-believers.

- Jesus made all food “clean” because His example and sacrifice would remove the need for the OT food laws.

IT IS WHAT COMES OUT THAT DEFILES US

“A good person produces good out of the good stored up in [their] heart. An evil person produces evil out of the evil stored up in [their] heart, for [their] mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart” (Luke 6:45).

- **Eventually the façade collapses and what has been stored in our hearts surfaces.**

WE MUST PROPERLY FEED THE HEART AND MIND

Jesus breaks down the evolution of evil: “from within, out of people’s hearts, come evil thoughts.” **If we allow evil into our hearts, it evolves into contemplation of evil action, which, if not addressed through repentance and a relationship with Jesus, will evolve into all sorts of evil actions.**

HUMILITY (MARK 7:24–30)

AFTER LAYING THE SMACK DOWN...

Jesus goes from one religious taboo to an even greater one that involves a Gentile woman from Phoenicia (Lebanon).

- Jesus rarely went into Gentile areas because His mission was first to the Jews. But this instance shows us that He fully intended to bring the gospel to all people.

TRYING TO GET SOME TIME AWAY

Jesus was in Tyre to escape the crowds, but it was impossible for Him to hide His presence from those who sought Him.

- The fact that He engaged in conversation with a Gentile woman was scandalous, but Jesus **cared less for religious custom and more for the souls of humble people.**

DID HE JUST CALL HER A DOG?

The woman asked for Jesus to deliver her possessed daughter. His reply, “It isn’t right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs,” sounds very harsh.

- This was not derogatory but showed that His mission was first to the Jews and then to the rest of the world.

THIS DID NOT SLOW HER DOWN

This woman was determined and was fine being second. She made the point that even though the dogs are second, they are still fed! The **humility** and **persistence** of this woman got Jesus’ attention.

- **Our faith will be tested at times in order to strengthen and reward it.**

“...AND THE DEMON WAS GONE.”

Gender, race, nationality, or any other barrier/excuse we create cannot hinder Jesus’ work. He loves and welcomes anyone who will humble and submit themselves.

- Jesus displayed that **man’s traditions are no match for His power.** He honored the request to deliver this woman’s daughter.

OPENED (MARK 7:31–37)

“THEY BROUGHT TO HIM A DEAF MAN”

Jesus returned to a region called Decapolis, a Greek-influenced area of Palestine. Here, people brought Jesus a deaf man who could barely speak, and they begged Him to heal him.

- Jesus took the man away from the crowd so the miracle could be private and not attract more attention.

FINGERS IN EARS AND SPIT ON TONGUE?

Jesus put His fingers in the man’s ears, spit on the ground, touched the man’s tongue, sighed deeply, and said, “Be opened!”

- Jesus could have just spoken a word (v. 29), but often times Jesus used physical objects to demonstrate and help others understand His miracles.

ANOTHER GENTILE

Again, a miracle shows that non-Jews were also invited by God to be saved. We also start to see the irony of Gentile acceptance vs. Jewish rejection.

- This is another reminder that **God is not exclusive when it comes to the invitation to be saved** (2 Peter 3:9; Romans 10:13).

MAKING SURE TO NOT MISS THE MAIN POINT

Jesus wanted the miracle to be private because **Jesus did not want His reputation to center around miracles and healing.**

- Jesus’ first objective is salvation and the invitation to live in relationship with Him. **Our motives should revolve around knowing God, not just being blessed by Him.**

TRADITION AND ISOLATION

- There is nothing wrong with traditions, as long as they do not contradict Scripture and never take precedence over it.
- Christians must also be careful to not isolate. **We are not called to isolation but insulation via the Spirit, so we’re equipped to go out into a dark world and bring light.**

THE BIBLE AS THE STANDARD

- **The Bible is the anchor and standard by which God has called us to live.**
- The only way to avoid the snares of man-made tradition and non-biblical isolation is to **learn and live out the teachings of the Bible and to grow in our sensitivity and understanding of the Holy Spirit.**

HOW WE APPROACH GOD

- Like the Phoenician woman, **we are to approach Jesus with humility and a sense of desperation/urgency.**
- When we admit that we are broken, desperate, and unworthy, Jesus saves, restores, builds up, and empowers us to be set free and produce good fruit!

THE HEART (WHY WE APPROACH GOD)

- We must be honest as to why we came. Are we here because of **obligation, tradition, for blessings, or just to escape damnation?** Or **do we desire to know Jesus?**
- The journey will work out if we are humble and objectively seek truth (Matthew 6:33). **What are our motives? Where are our hearts?**