

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 27TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

TRADITIONS (MARK 7:1–13) PHARISEES

The Pharisees appear again (Mark 3:22) to accuse Jesus. They judged Him through the lens of religious tradition rather than God's Word. When the disciples ate with ceremonially "unclean" hands, it gave the Pharisees another opportunity to attack.

- **Have we created any "rules" that are not in Scripture but shape how we see others?**

WHY WERE THE PHARISEES ANGRY?

In Jesus' time, Judaism upheld both the written law and the oral law—man-made traditions added to Scripture. Many religious leaders valued the oral law even above the written law. Jesus rejected their "rules."

- **Adding to God's Word can lead to legalism; subtracting from it can lead to compromise.** Both distort the gospel.

HYPOCRITES

Jesus responds by calling them hypocrites and quoting Isaiah 29:13. These religious actors spoke rightly about God, but their hearts were far from Him. **Their faith was all talk and performance.**

- **True worship** is not just singing or saying the right words—it is **living in daily obedience and love for God.**

CORBAN

The Pharisees declared resources "corban," a gift dedicated to God. This would cause them to dishonor their parents. Jesus confronts this, saying their tradition nullifies God's Word and elevates man-made rules.

- Traditions are not necessarily bad, but they must never replace obedience to God's Word.

DEFILEMENT (MARK 7:14–23) "LISTEN TO ME..."

Jesus turns to the crowd and expands the topic to true defilement. He explains that defilement is not external but internal—not what goes into a person but what comes out. The most dangerous contamination is the sin hidden in the heart.

- **External behavior can be deceiving**, but God sees and judges the heart.

A MORE DETAILED EXPLANATION

After speaking to the crowd, Jesus enters a house, where the disciples ask Him to explain the parable. His teaching confused them, as their Jewish background emphasized dietary laws as a key measure of holiness.

- Just like the disciples, **we must be willing to unlearn what tradition or culture has taught if it contradicts God's truth.**

"FOR FROM WITHIN, OUT OF PEOPLE'S HEARTS..."

Defilement may be internal and unseen, but it eventually reveals itself in our thoughts, words, and actions (vs. 21–23). No amount of handwashing can cleanse a selfish, sinful nature. **True transformation comes through Jesus. He changes us from the inside out.**

- **Don't keep sin in the dark. God will not only forgive us; He can also transform us.**

HUMBLE FAITH (MARK 7:24–30) "HE COULD NOT ESCAPE NOTICE..."

Jesus traveled north to the seaport city of Tyre—only the second time He entered Gentile territory (Mark 5:1–20). Though He wanted to rest, a Gentile woman urgently came to Him and fell at His feet, pleading for her daughter who had an unclean spirit.

- This mom was not deterred by the barriers. **She wanted Jesus no matter the cost.**

SOCIALLY UNACCEPTABLE

This woman had three strikes against her: her gender, her ethnicity, and her daughter's condition. Yet, her desperation and faith moved her to humbly cross every boundary to get to Jesus.

- **When we recognize our need, does it move us toward Jesus in faith or leave us stuck in fear?**

JESUS' RESPONSE

At first, Jesus' response seems harsh. He calls the Jews "children" and the Gentiles "dogs." This is a parable. Imagine a family meal where the children are fed first and the puppies are fed later. This was about the order of His mission.

- Jesus came first to Israel, but His mission was always meant to include all nations! **Do we limit whom we share the gospel with?**

THE WOMAN'S HUMBLE RESPONSE

The woman replies, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." **Her words reveal deep humility and a lack of entitlement.** She doesn't resent the blessings given to others or grow bitter over Israel's privilege.

- Instead, **she accepts her place and comes, like all must come to Jesus, as a sinner, poor and in need of mercy.**

THE WOMAN'S FAITH

This woman's faith must have pleased and surprised Jesus. Remarkably, the Gospels only mention "great faith" twice: once here, and once in reference to the Roman centurion (both in Matthew). Both were Gentiles and, in both cases, Jesus healed from a distance.

- Regardless of our background, ethnicity, or status, we can come to Jesus in faith.

RESTORATION (MARK 7:31–37) INTERCEDING

A deaf man with a speech impediment is brought to Jesus. Like the Gentile woman, his friends persistently begged Jesus to heal him, interceding for someone who could not speak for himself.

- **Faith is not just personal; it is communal.** Sometimes we must "carry others" to Jesus when they cannot come on their own.

A PERSONAL TOUCH FROM A PERSONAL GOD

Jesus takes the deaf man aside, responding with personal and compassionate care. Because the man could not hear or speak, **Jesus enters his world** and communicates in a way he could understand, through physical gestures, like a form of sign language.

- **Jesus meets us where we are. He enters our world with compassion.**

A DEEP SIGH

As Jesus looked up to Heaven, first He sighed. This may have been a deep expression of compassion for the man's suffering and sorrow over the brokenness of humanity. It may have been God's sigh over a fallen world.

- **How can we grow in compassion for the suffering of others, rather than become numb or indifferent?**

"HE HAS DONE EVERYTHING WELL..."

We can only imagine the first clear words this man spoke—very likely praise to God. Though Jesus told them not to spread the news, the more He commanded, the more they proclaimed.

- When we humble ourselves and approach God in faith, **He meets us where we are and restores us. He still is a God who "do[es] everything well."**

HOLD ON TO GOD'S WORD

- Are there rules or traditions we've embraced that are not grounded in Scripture?
- How can we guard against both legalism and compromise?
- Does our daily life reflect true worship or just words and rituals?
- **Do we honor God with our lips while our hearts remain distant?**

SURRENDER TO GOD'S WAYS

- Are there hidden sins or attitudes that need to come into the light?
- Are we willing to let Jesus transform us from the inside out?
- Our self-made solutions cannot clean a sinful heart—only God can.
- **Are we willing to ask God to search our hearts (Psalm 139:23–24)?**

HUMBLY ACCEPT GOD'S GIFT

- No matter our past, background, or status, we all have equal access to God's gift.
- Will we humble ourselves and admit our need for a Savior?
- **"Jesus sent no one away empty except those who were full of themselves"** (D.L. Moody). Pride will keep us from accepting God's gift.

PROCLAIM GOD'S GOODNESS

- **God meets us where we are, not to leave us there but to transform us.**
- He is still the God who "do[es] everything well."
- When was the last time we simply praised God for who He is?
- Does our life reflect God's goodness to a hurting world?