

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JULY 27TH, 2025 // GOSPEL OF MARK

TRADITIONS (MARK 7:1-13) "HAD COME FROM JERUSALEM"

As the people grew in their excitement about Jesus, the Pharisees and scribes grew in their hatred of Him. They wanted Him destroyed and were willing to travel to Galilee from Jerusalem to find fault with Him and His disciples.

- **There will always be people looking to catch us doing something "un-Christian." That is not accountability; it is accusation.**

UNWASHED HANDS

They accused the disciples of having unclean hands. This does not mean they were hygiene failures. Rather, they were not doing the ceremonial (traditional) washing expected of every good Jew.

- Mark goes on to say that they had many other customs they received from teachers in the past.
- This was not about being unclean; it was about conforming to their created and accepted rules.

"WHY DON'T YOUR DISCIPLES...?"

The religious leaders directed their critical question to Jesus. As the disciples' teacher, He would be held responsible for their conduct.

- Jesus had already proven Himself to be a troublemaker, and now He is leading a group that would not live according to the tradition of the elders.
- **Following Jesus means doing what He calls us to do. It may not look like what others expect. That is OK!**

"HE ANSWERED THEM"

Jesus did not pull any punches. He called them hypocrites—the kind of teachers Isaiah talked about.

- They might say the right things, but their hearts were not in sync with God.
- They exalted human tradition while ignoring the command of God.
- **There will always be religious professionals who trumpet God's Word with their own preferences.**

"INVALIDATING GOD'S COMMAND"

Jesus quoted the commandment to honor your father and mother. It is a simple and straightforward command but they had created a loophole to save some time and money.

- The Pharisees and scribes would devote items and money to the temple, instead of providing for their mothers' and fathers' needs.
- **Traditions are not bad until they become self-serving. Then, we find ourselves doing the opposite of what God commands, and THAT is a heart problem.**

DEFILED (MARK 7:14-23) "SUMMONING THE CROWD"

By focusing on the outside, the leaders were revealing their character and damaging the influence and authority of the Word of God.

- Jesus had directly called out the religious leaders, and now, He would share with the whole crowd the truth of the human heart.
- **When traditions are taught as God's Word, we are laying aside His Word. That leads to rejecting His Word and robbing it of its power. No matter how devout we may appear, if we do this, our hearts are far from God.**

UNDERSTANDING WHAT DEFILES

When Jesus went into the house, He clarified the meaning of the parable to His disciples.

- Simply put, food ends up in the stomach but sin begins in the heart.
- Food is expelled from the body, but sin remains in the heart and produces all kinds of defilement.
- **It is not about following customs and traditions; they cannot fix our problem. Only Jesus has access to our hearts. Through His work on the Cross, He can sync our hearts with God, enabling us to love Him and others.**

FAITH (MARK 7:24-30) "LET THE CHILDREN BE FED FIRST"

In response to the woman repeatedly asking for Jesus to cast out the demon, He gave an undiplomatic response.

- The "children" are the Israelites, and Jesus has a responsibility to nourish them spiritually.
- Jesus was not calling her a dog. He was revealing His priority mission to the Israelites. She understood and saw hope in His words.
- **Are we listening? Do we want Him so desperately that we can hear every opportunity to know Him?**

"HE COULD NOT ESCAPE NOTICE"

After moving to a new area, Jesus once again sought rest and privacy. Because of His fame, it was nearly impossible for Him to go unnoticed.

- A Gentile woman heard of Him and immediately came and fell at His feet. He was her only hope because her daughter was possessed by a demon.
- **She had heard of Jesus and nothing would stop her. She was a Gentile, considered unrighteous; a Syrophoenician, considered a godless oppressor of Israel; and a woman, considered unworthy to speak unless spoken to.**

"BECAUSE OF THIS REPLY"

Her faith led her to know that Jesus was giving her a way to connect.

- Her point was that the dogs get some food at the same time as the children and do not have to wait. She knew that a small portion of His grace would be enough. Her daughter was healed.
- **Maybe she had great faith. More likely, she had a humble faith in Jesus and His power over all things. Faith is not measured by how much we have; it is measured by how much we believe Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life.**

OPENED (MARK 7:31-37) "THEY BROUGHT TO HIM A DEAF MAN"

After leaving Tyre, Jesus went into another Gentile region. This is close to the area where Jesus was asked to leave after the pig incident. Now, they were coming to Him and asking for help.

- Some brought a deaf man with a speech impediment and begged Jesus to heal him.
- So it would not be a spectacle, Jesus took him to a private place.
- Since the man was deaf, he could not hear Jesus' words, but he could feel His touch.
- **He knows our limits and has a plan.**

"EPHPHATHA!"

Jesus touched the man's ears, spat on the ground, touched his tongue, and looked up to Heaven.

Jesus did what was uniquely required and caused the man to exercise faith.

- After the call to "Be opened," the man immediately began to hear and speak clearly.
- **Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually. Are we ready to "be opened" spiritually and allow His truth to invade our hearts?**

"HE HAS DONE EVERYTHING WELL"

The witnesses of the miracle were astounded to an extreme degree. Jesus was not locked into one method of healing people. He was unconventional and healed many different afflictions. Every day, He was looking more and more like a savior.

- **Do we believe that there are things Jesus cannot/will not do? What is so big or broken in our lives that we believe Jesus does not have the resources to repair it? Or worse, do we believe that Jesus cannot reach our community or specific individuals?**

LIMITS

- We set limits, and that is good.
- **What we cannot do is not the same as what God cannot do.**
- Even with all of our experiences, we still limit what God can do in the lives of people around us and in our own lives. This is not a God problem; it is an us problem.

PRIDE

- We have a pride problem.
- **When we adjust God's Word to fit our circumstances or make us look "holy," we are really trying to show off for others to see.**
- **If we are honest with ourselves, we ask: What is our motivation? Are we trying to look, feel, or be a certain way? Looking for Christ will change what we see, hear, and find. It will expose our FAITH.**

HUMILITY

- Humility is hard.
- **If we are to be people of authentic FAITH, we will need to look to Jesus for guidance more than to others.**
- **Humility believes that Jesus is bigger than our circumstances. Humility is revealed when we share the gospel and send others to Jesus for their sakes. Humility will love and serve everyone in our community.**