

22S48 Mark 7:1-23 (Part 14)

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today we are continuing our study of the gospel according to Mark with Mark 7:1-23 (Part 14) Jesus teaches the Pharisees defilement comes from within, God's commandments vs. religious tradition, and the heart of man.

Before we start, we need to understand a little about this amazing book in the bible. Most historians believe Mark was the first written account of Jesus' life, ministry, death and resurrection. The identity of Mark is not known for sure, but most believe this is John Mark. John Mark is spoken of by Luke in Acts as the cousin of Barnabas, John Mark is mentioned in many other books on the New Testament. Many believe he spent time traveling with Peter, so it is thought that much of Mark's gospel is actually from the perspective of Peter. We also believe that John Mark knew Jesus. There are accounts that Jesus stayed at Mark's mother's home, there are also some unique story details in Mark that are not in either Matthew's or Luke's accounts. We will try to highlight some of these as we go through the stories in Mark.

I'm reading from the New American Standard version (NAS) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

Let's read Mark 7:1-23 (NAS) *¹The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered to Him after they came from Jerusalem, ²and saw that some of His disciples were eating their bread with unholy hands, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the other Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thereby holding firmly to the tradition of the elders; ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they completely cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received as traditions to firmly hold, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and copper pots.) ⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk in accordance with the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unholy hands?" ⁶But He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: **BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. ⁷AND IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.** ⁸Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." ⁹He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'THE ONE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS CERTAINLY TO BE PUT TO DEATH'; ¹¹but you say, 'If a person says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is, given to God),' ¹²you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother; ¹³thereby invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that." ¹⁴After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside the person which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which come out of the person are what defile the person." ¹⁷And when He later entered a house, away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him about the parable. ¹⁸And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding as well? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the person from outside cannot defile him,*

¹⁹because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thereby He declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And He was saying, "That which comes out of the person, that is what defiles the person. ²¹For from within, out of the hearts of people, come the evil thoughts, acts of sexual immorality, thefts, murders, acts of adultery, ²²deeds of greed, wickedness, deceit, indecent behavior, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within and defile the person."

Let's pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your words from Mark, help us see what Mark wants his readers to understand and why. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

Now, let's take a closer look at these verses, Mark 7:1-4 (NAS) *¹The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered to Him after they came from Jerusalem, ²and saw that some of His disciples were eating their bread with unholy hands, that is, unwashed. ³(For the Pharisees and all the other Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thereby holding firmly to the tradition of the elders; ⁴and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they completely cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received as traditions to firmly hold, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and copper pots.)*

I don't want you to miss this. Pharisees and scribes from Jerusalem have come to see Jesus. But as usual, Jesus and His disciples offend them with their behavior. Hand washing had become an important part of their customs, their traditions. The Pharisees held strongly to the traditions of the elders, not the word of God. This dispute is about traditions.

Mark 7:5 (NAS) *⁵And the Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk in accordance with the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with unholy hands?"* They are offended that Jesus and His disciples do not keep the Jewish traditions. This is not a question of God's commands but human custom. But they are offended. So Jesus tries to correct this erroneous concept.

Mark 7:6-8 (NAS) *⁶But He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy about you hypocrites, as it is written: BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. ⁷'AND IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN.' ⁸Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."*

Jesus goes right to the point with a quote from the prophet Isaiah. Jesus uses the words of Isaiah to demonstrate that they are more focused on man-made traditions than God. Our modern churches are often guilty of this. We add our opinions and traditions, to God's word and commandments. As an example is worship days or proper clothing for church or type of music. None of these are in God's word. It does not mean these traditions are bad but they need to not be held in higher esteem than God's word and

teaching. Love others the way God loves them, don't impede people from discovering the truth of God.

Next Mark 7:9-13 (NAS) *⁹He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. ¹⁰For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'THE ONE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS CERTAINLY TO BE PUT TO DEATH'; ¹¹but you say, 'If a person says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is, given to God),' ¹²you no longer allow him to do anything for his father or his mother; ¹³thereby invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."*

Jesus cuts to the core of this issue. The traditions are self-serving for the Pharisees. If it benefits the Pharisees or the temple, then to them it is okay to violate the command of God. They care more for themselves and the temple, than keeping God's commands or the people God wishes the religious people to help and teach.

Next Mark 7:14-15 (NAS) *¹⁴After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵there is nothing outside the person which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which come out of the person are what defile the person."*

Jesus uses an excellent approach here. He does not expect the Pharisees or scribes to suddenly change their minds, but He knows others are watching. So, instead of focusing on debating endlessly with the stubborn Pharisees, He turns His attention to those who wish to know the truth.

Next Mark 7:17-23 (NAS) *¹⁷And when He later entered a house, away from the crowd, His disciples asked Him about the parable. ¹⁸And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding as well? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the person from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thereby He declared all foods clean.) ²⁰And He was saying, "That which comes out of the person, that is what defiles the person. ²¹For from within, out of the hearts of people, come the evil thoughts, acts of sexual immorality, thefts, murders, acts of adultery, ²²deeds of greed, wickedness, deceit, indecent behavior, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. ²³All these evil things come from within and defile the person."*

What a list, find any you struggle with, greed, deceit, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. These are the things that come from our hearts and out our mouth and hurt everyone. This is what it means to defile yourself.

Let's review.

- 1) Defilement? Defilement is the act of making something foul, dirty or unclean. To the Pharisee's this was a big deal. Ceremonial cleanliness. If you don't properly

wash your hands, then everything you eat will defile you. This was not about clean hands, this was about ceremony and tradition.

- 2) Traditions? Are traditions good or bad. Well it depends. But any tradition we honor more than God and God's commands is bad. We need to keep our focus on Jesus and not be petty about traditions or ceremony.
- 3) Words? Jesus uses this moment to teach about true defilement. That is our words or use of words. Our speech can hurt. It can destroy relationship, tear down people, insult, curse, blasphemy. Make fun of others, gossip, These are the real things that defile us, that is our own thoughts and words.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for Bible. Help us to read and meditate on your words so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to ask you for wisdom when we don't understand. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

Let me leave you with a couple things today. It does not matter what the tradition is or how important it is to you. If someone does not do things exactly the way you think they should, does not make them evil or degenerate. But our thoughts about that situation and others can and often does result in us doing and saying evil into this world.

What does this mean for you? Give grace instead of condemnation. I mean don't get so easily offended by what people say and do, even if it seems to violate your culture, your traditions, your opinions. Stay focused only on what God says is important, Not what people around us say is important. God knows best.

Thank you for joining me for our study of the gospel of Mark. Please email me comments or feedback. And if you liked the message, please share the link with your friends. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.