

Mark Chapter 7

V: 1 **Pharisees**: Conservatives, legalistic – hypocrites according to Jesus; and the **scribes**, attorneys, experts in the Law.

- **Sanhedrin**; spiritual oversight – Pharisees (“separated ones”), **Sadducees**.
- They came from Jerusalem, quite a distance to Capernaum.
- Definitely not a social visit, they had a purpose.
- They were on a “fault finding” mission.

John 1:19 “And this is the record of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, who are you?”

V: 2-5 The Pharisees were giving greater weight to the traditions of the fathers than to the Law; they saw the traditions as somehow binding.

- In those days they didn’t use serving and eating utensils, napkins and so on. When they ate it was with their hands tearing the bread apart, tearing meat off the roasted lamb with their hands, dipping in the sauces and so on. It was a messy affair; they used bread as napkins, wiping the bread on their hands and tossing it under the table or off to the side for the little dogs or for the beggars.
- We’re not talking about hygiene here; we’re talking about “ceremonial” cleanliness.

“Traditional” (ceremonial) **hand washing process**:

1. A servant would pour 1-½ eggshells worth of water on priests’ hands (or whoever) with the hands pointed upward.
2. The water would not be allowed to flow past the elbows, as this would merely transfer the un-cleanness down the arm.
3. A second 1 ½ egg shells worth of water would then be poured on the hands as they faced downward, rubbing the right palm over the left fist, then the left palm over the right fist.

- The Pharisee’s real question here is “what are you teaching these guys?”
- Pots & pans.... 3 second rule?

“... *they found fault.*” – Of course they did! If you come looking for fault, that is always what you will find.

- Sometimes it is all too easy to be critical and fault finding, but I’m reminded:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 “⁴Love suffers long / patient and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵does not behave rudely, does not seek its own is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

- **Torah**: the Law, Pentateuch, 1st 5 books of Moses. Sometimes it is used to include the entire Jewish scriptures, the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings.
- **Mishnah**: Codification of the oral law, the writing down of what had previously been the oral laws.
- **Talmud**: Jewish commentaries on the Mishnah, the law, leading to rabbinic Judaism and later rabbinical Pharisaism where the rabbi hears directly from God and as he speaks, it is with the authority of God.
- The Jews developed this into 648 laws broken down to major and minor laws all of which was difficult if not impossible to keep.

Deuteronomy 5:22 “These words the LORD spoke to all your assembly, in the mountain from the midst of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness, with a loud voice; and He added no more. And He wrote them on two tablets of stone and gave them to me.”

- Why do they eat with un-washed hands? – Ceremonially unclean according to the traditions of the fathers. (Separate, distinct from Gentiles, other cultures, national identity.)

V: 6 Quoting from **Isaiah 29:13**; Jesus starts off ... calling them hypocrites.

James 5:6 “... God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”

Ezekiel 33:31-32 “³¹So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. ³²Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them.”

- Hypocrites say one thing and do something else.

Matthew 23:2-5 “²... the scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat: ³Therefore 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. ⁴For 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. ⁵But all their works they do to be seen by men:...”

- Basically giving God “lip service” – they say nice things, but they don’t mean it, their hearts are distant from God.
- All show and no go.

V: 7 Their “worship” is in vain – it’s worthless, because it’s not real worship. They are just going through the motions, it is not heart felt or genuine.

John 4:23-24 “²³But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

“... teaching as doctrines the commandments of men,...”

- In place of doctrine, teaching from God’s Word, “the commandments of men.”
- “The commandment of men” is “religion” in the worst sense of the word.

Colossians 2:8 “Beware lest any man cheat / spoil you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ.”

- We need to be aware, wary of this in our time and culture:

2 Timothy 4:2-4 “²Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. ³For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; ⁴and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”

V: 8 Setting aside God’s commandments – holding to the traditions of man.

Romans 3:4 “... Let God be true but every man a liar...”

1 Thessalonians 2:13 “For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the Word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

- Washing of pots, cups, etc.
- Along with the ceremonial hand washing, they washed all their stuff in between courses for their meals.

- They still have one set of silver ware, plates, cups etc for when cheese or dairy products are served, and another complete set of the same for when they eat their meat or other dishes. (Tradition / rule meat & cheese **Exodus 23:19**)

Quoting from the Talmud:

- Rabbi Eleazer said, *“He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition has no share in the world to come.”* ???
- “It is a greater offense to teach anything contrary to the voice of the Rabbis than to contradict Scripture itself.”

V: 9 There are many churches that are like this today:

- 2nd commandment: make no graven images and don't bow down to them – yet there are churches with statues of Jesus, Mary, and a host of others – the toes of which are worn down from people bowing down and kissing the toes of these statues.

The prophet Jeremiah spoke truth to the people, but they rejected it all the same:

Jeremiah 44:16-17 “¹⁶As for the word that you have spoken to us in the name of the LORD, we will not listen to you! ¹⁷But we will certainly do whatever has gone out of our own mouth,...

- Churches that in complete contradiction to the word of God condone homosexuality, adultery, and fornication, women teaching from the pulpit, – because our own cultural tradition says that it is acceptable.

Psalm 119:126 “It is time for you to act LORD, for they have regarded Your law as void.”

- You might ask then, how do we determine our own practice as a fellowship? Isn't it just based on tradition as well?

Acts 2:42 “And they continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

- Did Jesus teach it? Did the church of Acts practice it? Is it described in the epistles? These are all great ways to validate the conduct of the church today.

V: 10-13 Jesus begins to offer His own examples:

- 5th Commandment: honor your father and your mother. (**Exodus 20:12**)
- There was no welfare system in place, God's intent was that families would take care of each other and part of that honoring their parents was taking care of them in their older years.

- Their “tradition” / contradiction - “corban”.
- The Pharisee’s released the children from supporting their parents by declaring such support as “Corbin” - meaning dedicated to the Lord, and the parents were on their own. They even deemed it sacrilege if they afterwards gave anything for their support.
- “It’s all dedicated to the Temple, sorry I can’t do anything for you.” ☹

Exodus 21:17 “And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.”

1 Timothy 5:8 “But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel / unbeliever.”

Digression:

V: 8 Laying aside the commandment of God.

V: 9 Rejecting the commandment of God.

V: 13 Making the Word of God of none effect.

V: 14-15 Addressing the accusation of the Pharisees and Scribes from V’s 2-5 eating with unwashed hands.

- Bear in mind that as our Lord makes this correction He is doing so in front of the Pharisees and Scribes, directly contradicting them.

Sermon on the mount:

Matthew 5:21-22 “²¹You have heard that it was said to those of old.... ²²But I say to you...”

Matthew 15:12 “Then His disciples came and said to Him, “do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?”

- It isn’t what goes into a man that defiles him, it is what comes out.
- A little dirt won’t hurt: cookie falls on the floor, the “three second rule” – might not always be good for you – but it won’t defile you.
- It’s not what goes into our mouths that makes us unclean, it’s what comes out:

Matthew 15:17-20 “¹⁷Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? ¹⁸But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness,

blasphemies. ²⁰These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

What usually comes out of the mouth of men? Words:

Ephesians 4:29 “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.”

Colossians 3:8 “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth.”

V: 16 He that has ears to hear, let him hear: familiar admonition to those with a willing heart for the word of God.

Psalm 51:10 “Create in me a clean heart, Oh God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

Psalm 19:14 “Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”

V: 17-23 The disciples weren't sure what Jesus was talking about – this was a complete contradiction to their entire life's education – it was a radical concept.

- Part of our Christian walk is coming to grips with our own depravity and that we can't trust our hearts:

Proverbs 28:26 “He who trusts in his own heart is a fool,” (Why?)

Jeremiah 17:9 “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”

V: 21-22 13 attributes are mentioned, 13 = number of rebellion. Taken from the hearts of the Pharisees & Scribes, and all of us.

Galatians 5:19-21 “¹⁹Now the works of the flesh are these, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness / lasciviousness, ²⁰idolatry, sorcery / witchcraft, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions / strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and such like: of the which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told you in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

- The real issue is that of the heart:
 1. **Romans 10:9-10** *Believe* in our hearts.
 2. **Matthew 22:37** *Love* with all our hearts.
 3. **Romans 6:17** *Obey* in our hearts.
 4. **Psalm 9:1** *Praise* Him from our hearts.

5. 2 Corinthians 9:17 Give from our hearts.

Circumcised in our hearts.

Romans 2:29 “But he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is not from men but from God.”

1 Samuel 16:7 “But the Lord said to Samuel, “do not look at his appearance or at his physical stature, because I have refused him. For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.”

- Tradition is external, truth is internal, God looks at the heart.

V: 24-26 Tyre & Sidon:



- Greek, Syro-Phoenician – woman. A woman of Canaan.
- Woman had a very poor standing in the culture of the time. Jewish men prayed “I thank you Lord that I was not born a Gentile, a woman, or a dog”.

Matthew 15:21-28 Parallel account. [Turn to / read](#)

- “*O Lord, thou Son of David*” (Matthew)— a messianic title; as a gentile she had no claim to this title.
- Jesus only responds to her after she drops the pretense, reference to the Messiah. She simply and humbly refers to Jesus as “Lord”.

V: 25 She fell at His feet: humility, worship. The place of true healing.

Psalm 51:17 “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

V: 27-28 **Deuteronomy 23:17-18** **Revelation 22:15** Refers to dogs in negative terms, in this verse “dog” is used to say “puppy”.

- Willing to bear His reproach she seizes on Jesus’ illustration; “but even the puppies eat the scraps thrown from the children’s table.”

V: 29-30 For this saying – this profession of faith. Jesus knew all along what He would do, He was simply drawing this expression of faith out for the edification of His disciples, and for us.

Matthew 15:28 “Then Jesus answered and said to her, O woman, great is your faith: Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.”

V: 31-37 Heading back to the Decapolis – healing the deaf mute.



- Deca = Greek for 10, Polis = city the area of the 10 cities.
- Matthew records that there were multitudes that thronged Jesus looking for healing. This man in singled out:

V: 33 This chapter starts out dealing with “traditions” – here we see Jesus avoids set patterns, a “formula” for healing – keeping us from “traditions” as such.

- For others He simply spoke, or he touched, made mud and had them wash.
- Here we have the “wet-willie” miracle.

V: 34 “Looking up to Heaven...” to the One who would be glorified, to the One from where every good and perfect gift comes from.

James 1:17 “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.”

V: 37 He has done all things well:

Psalm 139:14 “I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; marvelous are Your works, and that my soul knows vey well.”

- Fulfilling prophecy.

Isaiah 35:5-6 “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then the lame shall leap like a deer, and the tongue of the dumb sing. For waters shall burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert.”