

Jesus and the Hearts of Men and Women

S. R. Mark 7:1 - 2

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Jesus vs. Tradition

Read Mark 7:1 - 13

The Pharisees and scribes challenged the disciples because they ate with unwashed hands. The issue here was not hygiene, but religious ritual. The Pharisees had developed elaborate cleansing procedures that they believed were a part of God's will. The truth is, God had never commanded these washings; they originated with the doctrines and traditions of men. Jesus answered His critics by pointing out the difference between God-given commandments and human traditions. He showed that their insistence on following rules established by men caused them to actually break God's law. He cited the case of "Corban." This was a Jewish tradition that prohibited a person from using his resources to provide for his aging parents if he had previously declared those resources "dedicated" to God. Their obedience to men's doctrines led them to disregard God's will.

Note -- Men's doctrines vs. God's commands: *Men continue to follow their own traditions and doctrines rather than God's word. Just like the scribes and Pharisees, people today believe that their doctrines actually are God's will. They haven't learned how to distinguish between unnecessary rules and binding commands. Jesus showed how easy it is to tell the difference: Look at their source. Any religious practice or teaching that comes from man is wrong; those which come from God are right. We should examine everything we do to see whether it comes from God or man. Everything from God is in the Bible. So if what I believe isn't taught by Scripture, I can know it must be from man.*

1. What criticism did the Pharisees and scribes raise against Jesus' disciples? Answer: The disciples did not _____ their hands before they _____ food.
2. What was the authority behind this religious practice? Answer: It was a _____ of the elders.
3. What did Jesus say about service to God that is based on the doctrines of men (v7)? Answer: He said their worship was _____.

Emphasis on the Heart

Read Mark 7:14-23

The Pharisees focused primarily on external things. But Jesus showed that what actually defiles a person are the things inside his heart. In the Bible, the heart refers to the mind or spirit of man. Every sin germinates and grows within man's spirit and is then expressed in external action. In this way, the Lord showed how foolish it was for the Pharisees to be frantically seeking external purity by a ritual hand washing procedure. This principle also proved that God no longer had rules prohibiting the eating of certain foods.

Note -- We need a heart check-up: *Jesus' words should motivate us to carefully examine our own heart. Heart disease is a warning symptom, and if not detected and cured, will result in all manner of sin. Jesus warned about greed, envy, pride, and lust. These attitudes are wrong, and must be checked at their onset. We must care for our*

heart by feeding on the pure Word of God and constantly seeking the Lord.

4. What causes a person to be defiled? Answer: A person is defiled by things that come from out of his _____.

Jesus Heals a Gentile Woman's Daughter

Read Mark 7:24–30

Jesus had traveled to a predominantly Gentile area. Before this, almost all of His work had been done with Jews. He had healed Jews; His apostles were Jews; and He preached to Jews. Jesus wanted to have some time alone with the apostles, so He withdrew to a Gentile region north of Galilee. He had hoped to stay there undetected, but a Syrian woman found out He was there and came requesting that He heal her demon-possessed daughter. At first, Jesus refused. He said that it was not good to take bread from the children and feed it to the dogs. What he meant was that according to God's plan it wasn't time yet to heal and teach the Gentiles; the Jews (the children) were the ones God intended to be the recipients of the bread (healings and blessings in general) first. God planned that later on through the Jewish people the gospel would be introduced to the Gentiles. This woman showed great faith, humility and quickness because she responded: Yes, but even the dogs under the table get to eat the crumbs. She implied that just a mere crumb of Jesus' miraculous power would be sufficient to heal her daughter. She also recognized that this did not signal the beginning of a major Gentile "campaign." As a result, Jesus healed her daughter. The conversation had made it clear that she would not misinterpret the healing as a sign that the time for the Gentiles had come.

5. Of what race or nationality was the woman who came to Jesus? (a) Jewish, (b) Hindu, (c) Greek/Gentile (Syrophoenician), (d) American.
6. What problem did she want Jesus to solve? Answer: She wanted Him to cure her daughter who had a _____.
7. What did Jesus tell her, and how did she respond? Answer: He said that the children's bread should not be thrown to _____. She said that even the dogs get to eat the _____ that fall from (or are under) the _____.

Jesus Heals a Deaf Man

Read Mark 7:31–37

Please read this paragraph in your Bible before continuing. You undoubtedly noticed that Jesus used an unusual procedure to heal this deaf man. After taking him away from the crowd, Jesus put His fingers into the man's ears, and touched the man's tongue with His own saliva. Apparently, Jesus was using "sign language" to communicate with him, and to let him know who was about to heal him. Had Jesus not done this, the man would have suddenly begun to hear, but would not have understood why. The multitude's affirmation was absolutely correct: "He has done all things well!"

8. What effect did the miracle have on the crowds? Answer: They were amazed and said that Jesus did everything _____.