

Recap of 8/13/23 message by Pastor Joe (Mark 7:6-23):

1. In Mark 7:1-23 Jesus corrects the wrong-thinking of the Scribes and Pharisees concerning oral tradition, which in Jesus' day was elevated over obedience to the Word of God. He challenges them in two areas. One, the Word of God must take precedence over the oral law which is in reality following manmade rules and voiding the Word of God. Jesus emphasizes the human origin of traditions. Secondly, Jesus teaches that moral impurity comes from the heart, that is, holiness is a matter of the heart not the hands.

-Richards lists four reasons that following human tradition is unhealthy:

-Our traditions can become a test of acceptability.

-Tradition can become a measure of spirituality.

-Tradition can be used to set aside the commands of God.

-Tradition can shift our emphasis from personal piety and holiness to the external; more concerned with how we look than being holy.

2. Quoting Isaiah 29:13, Jesus accuses these religious leaders of being hypocrites, a word which refers to an actor, a "pretender." "One whose whole life is a piece of acting without any sincerity behind it at all."

3. Concerning the meticulous hand-washing rituals which the Jews followed, Jesus challenged them that what defiles a person morally is not unwashed hands, but an "unwashed heart." Sin comes from within, not from without. Its origin is the corrupt heart (the old sin nature). To deal with sin in our lives effectively, we must begin with the heart, not the sin itself. It is only the expressions of a heart does not attune to God's Word and will. Jeremiah said in Jeremiah 17:9, The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. A "washed heart" is needed.

4. Mark 7:24-37 picks up on Jesus' declaration in Mark 7:19, declaring all foods clean. The taking of the gospel to all nations is foreshadowed here, as Jesus ministers to two gentiles. There is no difference between Jew and gentile, for all are sinners in need of a Savior. The Syrophoenician woman, called a Canaanite by in Matthew's gospel, to emphasize her non-Jewish identity, recognized her need and trusted Christ to meet her need. She demonstrated faith and her need was met. - "Great faith is faith that takes God at His Word and will not let go until God meets the need. Great faith can lay hold of the slightest encouragement and turn it into a fulfilled promise." (Wiersbe)

5. Jesus then heals a man who was deaf and as a result could hardly talk. The healing was instantaneous. Grassmick writes: "Defective speech usually results from defective hearing, both physically and spiritually."