

Mark 7

Mark 7:1 Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

This verse gives a glimpse of the organized resistance against Jesus. This is the third Passover of Jesus' public ministry. He did not attend this Passover in Jerusalem probably to delay for another year His death. Therefore the Scribes and Pharisees came to Galilee to watch Him and conspire against Him. No doubt, these were the shrewdest and most able were sent from the seat of learning and authority in Jerusalem. They were probably considered to be better prepared to confront Jesus than the Scribes and Pharisees in Galilee.

This sharp controversy, which contains the sharpest rebuke that Christ had thus far paid to the Pharisaical system, is recorded also by Matt. 15:1-20, Mark, for the benefit of Gentile readers, adds a few words concerning Jewish customs. They came from Jerusalem. They were probably formally sent by the Sanhedrim to investigate the work and teaching of Jesus.

Mark 7:2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

The Pharisees were watching for an opportunity to attack Jesus.

Not dirty, not "unwashed" but rather the Greek word baptizo, unbaptized fully immersed hands. The "tradition of the elders" required them to always fully baptize their hands before eating lest they might have touched something ceremonially unclean.

Mark 7:3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

Oft (or often) is washing frequently, diligently, and carefully up to the elbow. The traditions of the Elders is what had been handed down not what was delivered in writing in the Law of Moses, but rather, what was handed down from father to son. The Elders, are the Ancients, the forefathers. The Pharisees claimed that there were two laws, one

written by Moses, and other oral traditions, handed down from Moses to Aaron to the elders of that time, and then from generation to generation. They attached more importance to the tradition than the law itself, or more importance to the interpretation of the scripture than the scriptures themselves. A digest of the tradition is called the Mish-nah. Comments on the Mish-nah are explained in the Tal-mud, thus the Mish-nah explains the law, and the Tal-mud explains the Mish-nah.

The duty of washing before meat is not inculcated in the law, but only in the tradition of the scribes. So rigidly did the Jews observe it, that Rabbi Akiba, being imprisoned, and having water only sufficient to sustain life given him, preferred dying of thirst rather than to eating without washing his hands.

Mark 7:4 *And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.*

The marketplace is a broad place in the city for public meeting. Here children met to play, laborers to seek work, the sick to be healed, and philosophers to discuss great questions. The Pharisees loved the salutations in the marketplace.

In the Greek, not the word rendered "wash" elsewhere in the passage, but *baptize*. Apparently, in the ritual of the Pharisees, washing by pouring on water sufficed for those who remained at home, but *immersion* of the hands in water was required of those who had gone out of the house. They not only insisted on washing the hands, because of the tradition, but also, many other things. The law of Moses required purifications in certain, but the rabbis had perverted the spirit of Leviticus in this as in other things, for they taught that food and drink could not be taken with a good conscience when there was the possibility of ceremonial defilement. If every perceivable precaution had not been taken, the person or the vessel used might have contracted impurity, which would thus be conveyed to the food, and through the food to the body, and by it to the soul. Hence it had been

long a custom, and a strict law, that before every meal not only the hands, but even the dishes, couches, and tables, should be scrupulously washed."

Mark 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

They do not accuse Jesus of this but rather His disciples.

To not live according to their tradition was to transgress the traditions of the fathers. cf: Matthew 15:2

Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me.

Their false doctrine and practice was foretold by the prophet Isaiah. This is the first time Jesus openly called them hypocrites. They were hypocrites or actors in motive and purpose.

Mark 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

The precepts or commandments of men were the doctrines that they taught as binding.

Isa 29:13 Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near *me* with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:

Isa 29:14 Therefore, behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, *even* a marvellous work and a wonder: for the wisdom of their wise *men* shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent *men* shall be hid.

Isa 29:15 Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the LORD, and their works are in the dark, and they say, Who seeth us? and who knoweth us?

Mark 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

Thus, they have set the pure Word of God on the side track, neglecting and disregarding the commandments of God and cling to the traditions of men. They dethroned God and gave man His seat.

Mark 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

They could not do both, in order to keep their traditions they rejected the commandments of God. Jesus came down from heaven to do the will of God, who sent Him. Cf: John 6:38. Not the traditions of the elders or the precepts of men which have no part in the Will of God.

In reply to the Pharisees, Jesus attacked tradition itself and charged His accusers with three things. 1. Hypocrisy, because they pretended to honor God with their lips and their hearts were far from Him. 2. Worshipping in vain, because they taught as their

doctrine the commandments of men. 3. Rejecting the commandments of God in order to keep their tradition.

Mark 7:10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

Jesus introduces an example to prove His charge against them. Cf: Exodus 20:12. The Decalogue or Ten Commandments is Divine in its origin and Moses is the inspired teacher and lawgiver. Honor thy father and thy mother in every way, word, deed, and thought and providing for them in their old age.

Mark 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is Corban*, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free.*

By your tradition and your practice, you're in opposition to God's law by your gift of corban, which is an offering or sacrifice given to God. Their tradition said even pronouncing the word corban over one's property, absolved him from the obligation of caring for his parents.

Mark 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

You allow the children to do as they desire, and you should be ashamed of this wicked practice.

Mark 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

The tradition had been handed down by practice and had annulled the Word of God, Jesus returns to the charge He made in vs. 8.

One of the most general and popular evils of today is the neglect of the old, and disregard of parents. To honor father and mother is the first commandment with promise. Cf: Ephesians 6:1-3. To pretend to be Christians while neglecting these home duties is Pharisaical and worse than infidels. Cf: I Timothy 5:4-8

Mark 7:14 And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand:

This indicates that the preceeding incident was probably private, and He now had something of importance that demanded their closest attention. The Pharisees and Scribes teach you about an imaginary ceremonial traditional defilement, but here is where the real defilement comes from, and of what it consists.

Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

Nothing going into the mouth, then the stomach, for nourishment makes a man common or unclean morally. The things that come from the heart and out of the mouth, his words are what make him common or unclean. Impure words indicate an impure heart. Jesus plays down the principle that what is eaten does not affect the character.

Mark 7:16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Mark 7:17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

Therefore we understand that the teaching of the multitude was done outdoors.

Mark 7:18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him;

You, my disciples, who have been so highly favored with my day to day teaching should understand. Eating cannot render the soul polluted and make man a sinner.

Mark 7:19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

The food does not reach, or affect the mind or soul. The theories of the Pharisees therefore, are not founded in reason, but in mere superstition. The heart is the seat, or center of the inner man, or soul. Food in the digestive tract cannot affect the morals of men. The process of digestion is a cleansing one. Whatever is impure is separated from the food and carried off, leaving what is nutritious to enter the blood and become part of the body.

Mark 7:20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

The words from an evil heart are really what is polluted and offensive in the sight of God.

Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

The mind, the inner man, the seat of all intentions and actions, thinks evil thoughts as well as good ones.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

Proverbs 23:7A For as he thinketh in his heart, so *is* he: ...

Mark 7:22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

Mark 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

Evil originates and comes from the heart. The best way to check the progress of sin in our life is to mortify it in the heart, and to crucify sin that is corrupt root – the heart of man. The heart is a cage of uncleanness Cf: Colossians 3:1ff.

Mark 7:24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid.

The frontier region was the two principal cities, Phoenicia on the coast of the Mediterranean coast, a hundred miles northwest of Jerusalem. Both were Gentile cities in a Gentile country. This is the only instance in Jesus' Ministry that He went beyond the bounds of Israel. He went into a private house probably to give instructions to the Apostles.

Mark 7:25 For a *certain* woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

She had heard of Him and His miracles and falling at His feet denotes reverence and earnest pleading. Her faith in His power is thus manifested. Faith led her to Jesus. Matthew 15:22 adds the words "O Lord, thou son of David" showing she knew the prophecies that Christ would be a descendent of David.

Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

Mark describes the woman as a Gentile. Matthew 15:22ff calls her a Canaanite and says Jesus answered her not a word.

What would you do if you asked me a question and I ignored you?

Some people in the Church are too sensitive. Jesus had something this woman needed and she knew she could not get it any where else.

Next Matthew says the disciples tell Jesus to send her away. What would you do if you heard others talking about you? Use it as an excuse and say I'm out of here! Where else would you go? There is only the Church.

There were reasons for hesitation, he delayed to bring out the lesson. Cf: Matthew 15:24. "I was not sent but to the lost sheep of the House of Israel".

Mark 7:27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs.

It was not yet time for the Gentiles. There was, however, hope for her in the future. “It is not meet” good, right, or proper. The Jews considered themselves the Children of God, and all other nations were referred as dogs which were words of contempt. Jesus did not intend to justify, or sanction, the use of such terms, but rather, to try her faith.

Mark 7:28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

I am indeed one of the dogs, a Gentile, and willing to take my place as one. I am willing to accept the crumbs after all of the children are filled. The answer of the woman is a wonderful illustration of faith. It's hard to know what to admire the most, her wit, or her humility.

Mark 7:29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

Her request was granted. Matthew 15:28 says “O woman, great is thy faith.”

Mark 7:30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

She returned in full confidence. Doubtless the mothers heart was full of joy.

Mark 7:31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

The coasts of Decapolis was a district east of the Sea of Galilee and the Jordan, so called because it contained ten cities. Only Mark gives the account of the following miracle.

Mar 7:32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

The demoniac of Gadarenes after his healing went through this region declairing what great things Jesus had done for him. So friends of a deaf stammerer bring him to Jesus. Blessings were commonly imparted by laying on of hands.

One that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. Probably had not been born deaf, as he was not dumb.

Mark 7:33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

His friends suggested their way of healing to “put his hands on him” they needed to be taught to leave the way to Jesus. Jesus took him aside, the people may have gathered to witness a great miracle but Jesus would make no display. While He would strengthen their faith He would not feed their superstition. Jesus shows He was not limited to any one way of exercising His power.

Mark 7:34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened

The manner of the Lord in this miracle was peculiar. We understand that he used signs instead of words in order to arouse faith in the deaf man. He touched the organs that had lost their office and then looked to heaven. This would be deeply significant to one who had learned to understand by signs. Ephphatha. An Aramaic word in the common language of Judea at that time, meaning "Be opened."

Mark 7:35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

At once both his difficulties were removed.

Mark 7:36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

This is a way of showing that He did not desire the praise of men.

Mark 7:37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

In the Greek: "very abundantly" astonished.

Genesis 1:31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, *it was* very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

In this Mark's account and the parallel in Matthew the characteristic difference between the two writers is seen cf: Matthew 15:30-31 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

Matthew gives no particular description of any single case. Mark on the other hand selects one single cure and describes it and its effect on the people.

He maketh both the deaf to hear and the dumb to speak. Christ, ever since, has been engaged, spiritually, in the same work.

Isaiah 750 years before Christ came told us of the signs that the Christ would work when He comes:

Isa 35:1 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.

Isa 35:2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, *and* the excellency of our God.

Isa 35:3 Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees.

Isa 35:4 Say to them *that are* of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will come *with* vengeance, *even* God *with* a recompence; he will come and save you.

Isa 35:5 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

Isa 35:6 Then shall the lame *man* leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.

Isa 35:7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, *shall be* grass with reeds and rushes.

Isa 35:8 And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it *shall be* for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err *therein*.

Isa 35:9 No lion shall be there, nor *any* ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk *there*:

Isa 35:10 And the ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.