

SERMON NOTES:

Series: Mark -The Simple Gospel | Week 23: Truth Over Traditions

Mark 7:1-13 (NLT) *Jesus Teaches about Inner Purity*

¹ One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. ² They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. ³ (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions. ⁴ Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to—such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, “Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony.”

⁶ Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote, ‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’

⁸ For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition.”

⁹ Then he said, “You skillfully sidestep God's law in order to hold on to your own tradition. ¹⁰ For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and ‘Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.’ ¹¹ But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, ‘Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.’ ¹² In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents. ¹³ And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others.”

Jesus accuses the scribes and Pharisees of two things:

1) He accused them of hypocrisy.

Where people are prone to look at outward appearances, God looks at the heart.

1 Samuel 16:7 (NLT)

⁷ But the Lord said to Samuel, “Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

2) He accused them of substituting the efforts of human traditions for the laws of God.

“Jesus was attacking a system which put rules and regulations before the claim of human need. The commandment of God was that they claim of human love should come first; the commandment of the scribes was that the claim of legal rules and regulations should come first. Jesus was quite sure that any regulation which prevented anyone from giving help where help was needed was nothing less than a contradiction of the law of God. We must take care that we never allow rules to paralyze the claims of love. Nothing that prevents us helping another person can ever be a rule approved by God.”

- William Barclay

There is a tendency for people to give traditions more weight than Scripture.

Sticking to rules and formulas can be more appealing to some than sticking to the requirements of love.

The questions we should ask ourselves is this:

Have we become the hypocrite? Honoring God with our lips but not our hearts?

Where have our traditions become more important than staying true to God's Word?

Have we made others feel more obliged to honor our rules than God's Word?