

# Week 10

## Supernaturally Transformed Series

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August 24, 2024

### Opening Monologue

We continue our Sermon Series: Supernaturally Transformed.

The Word of God says this: “May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13) Being filled with the Spirit and the power of Jesus Christ is the key ingredient to living transformed.

We all look into a dark world filled with a woke culture starring us in the face. There is an anti-Christ agenda telling us to be tolerant and to accept unbiblical truths. So, what do we do as Christians? Think about this... right now, a human being can be anything they want to be... for real, and I don't need to get into the details you know exactly what I mean.

In this week's sermon we are going to discuss the choices we have and how we must stay true to God's Word. We will dig into the woke Jewish customs/ traditions and see what Jesus had to say; this helps us align ourselves with Biblical Truth.

Jesus said to the Religious Leaders: “... you nullify the word of God by your traditions that you have handed down...Isaiah was right, you honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me” (Mark 7:6-13 excerpts)

Be sure to listen to this week's sermon; or join us In Person Live!

Blessings in Christ!

Rev. Brad Standfest

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**To Listen to this week's Sermon: "Week 10 - Supernaturally Transformed" Go to the Sermon tab here in our APP or use the links to our website or YouTube Channel where you can also listen to our Sermons:**

**Web:** <https://www.almontvineyardchurch.org/media>

**You Tube:** <https://www.youtube.com/@almontvineyardchurch>

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## **Key Sermon Text**

### **Romans 15:13**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans%2015%3A13&version=NIV>

### **Ephesians 3:16-19**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ephesians%203%3A16-19%20&version=NIV>

### **Mark 7:1-13**

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%207%3A1-13&version=NIV>

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## **Don't Hinder your life by not following God's Word**

Not adhering to God's Word can have profound effects on our moral integrity and our relationship with Jesus Christ, as well as on our ability to live an empowered life. The Bible provides insight into how straying from God's commandments can lead to moral corruption and hinder our spiritual well-being.

**1. Separation from God's Wisdom:** Proverbs 3:5-6 advises, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." Turning away from God's Word means turning away from His wisdom, which guides us to make righteous choices. Without this guidance, we are more likely to make decisions based on human wisdom, which is flawed and limited, potentially leading to moral corruption.

**2. Hardening of the Heart:** Hebrews 3:13 warns, "But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called 'today,' that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin." Sin, often resulting from not

adhering to God's Word, can harden our hearts towards Him and others. A hardened heart is less receptive to God's guidance, love, and correction, which are essential for a healthy relationship with Him and for living a life empowered by His Spirit.

**3.Spiritual Blindness:** Ephesians 4:18 speaks of those who are "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart." Ignoring God's Word can lead to spiritual blindness, where one is unable to perceive spiritual truths or discern right from wrong according to God's standards. This blindness keeps individuals from experiencing the fullness of life that comes from a relationship with God.

**4.Loss of Fellowship and Power:** 1 John 1:6-7 tells us, "If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin." Fellowship with God is maintained through obedience to His Word, which also empowers us to overcome sin and live victoriously. By not adhering to His Word, we jeopardize this fellowship and the empowerment that comes with it.

**5.Vulnerability to Temptation and Sin:** Psalm 119:11 says, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." God's Word is a powerful defense against temptation and sin. It provides the wisdom and strength needed to resist the enticements that lead to moral failure. Without it, we are more vulnerable to the corrupting influences of the world.

Living an empowered life, according to biblical principles, involves a deep commitment to knowing and following God's Word. It is the foundation for moral integrity, a vibrant relationship with God, and the strength to overcome life's challenges. By adhering to God's commandments, we remain in His love (John 15:10), enjoy His blessings, and are equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

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## **Commentary: Mark 7**

### **JESUS TEACHES ABOUT INNER PURITY / 7:1-23**

After the eye-opening demonstrations of Jesus' power in chapter 6, Mark provided a pause in the action by telling of another confrontation between Jesus and the Pharisees. Similar confrontations had already occurred: 2:6-12; 2:15-17; 2:18-20; 2:23-28; 3:1-6; 3:22-30. Jesus' dramatic actions were met by determined resistance from groups that Mark identified as "Pharisees and teachers of the law." Unable to overcome Jesus directly, their tactics shifted to the disciples. They were sure that the disciples were the weak point in Jesus' defenses.

This could be called a "conflict of interest." Both the religious leaders and Jesus were questioning each other's application of the law. The religious authorities had long-established interpretations of the law that tended to confirm and expand the power of the religious ruling class while making a mockery of God's standards. In Matthew 23:24, Jesus characterized their error as fruitlessly straining out gnats while allowing camel-sized disobedience of the law to go unchallenged. He charged them with demanding that others carry heavy loads of obligations while excusing themselves. The freedom to obey God that the disciples learned from Jesus threatened the status and control wielded by the religious leaders. Their reaction against Jesus paved the way to Calvary.

Let us examine our own efforts to apply God's Word. We must not give our own rules, policies, and applications of Scripture the same authority as God's Word.

**7:1-2 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them.** Another delegation came from Jerusalem to investigate this new rabbi who was causing such a stir throughout the country. In 2:18, the Pharisees attacked Jesus through his disciples by claiming that the disciples were wrong not to fast (breaking the religious leaders' additions to God's law); then in 2:24, they claimed that the disciples were wrong to pluck heads of grain and eat them on the Sabbath (again, only breaking one of their additions to God's law); in 3:22, such a delegation had incorrectly concluded that Jesus was casting out demons because he himself was demon possessed.

In this chapter another delegation arrived, ready to debate Jesus about his disciples' disregard of the oral traditions and rituals. During the centuries since the Jews' return from Babylonian captivity, Jewish religious leaders had added hundreds of religious traditions to God's laws. These laws regulated every part of Jewish life. The Pharisees and scribes considered these religious traditions to be as binding and unbreakable as God's law itself. In this assumption they were wrong, as Jesus would point out.

The common people did not follow all the strict extra rules and rituals of the Pharisees; thus, these religious leaders looked down on them as ignorant. The fact that Jesus' disciples did not follow all of the laws of the Pharisees' oral tradition led this Jerusalem delegation to resent Jesus' teaching and try to discredit him. If Jesus were truly a rabbi, he and his disciples would be following all the traditions. The Pharisees had religious blinders on their eyes, seeing only their own rituals and traditions. Jesus flouted their authority, criticized some of their rules and regulations, and had become dangerously popular.

## **THE PHARISEES**

We must be careful not to gloss over the Pharisees and teachers of the law as out-of-touch religionists or nitpicky legalists. To do so would be to miss the dynamic message to our times today.

Undoubtedly there were many authoritarian religious leaders who wanted to keep their place in the power structure at any cost. There were also many who were genuine religious conservatives, enraged by the challenge of the new teacher who cast long-established traditions aside. There were many religious people who thought they were rightly defending the honor of Yahweh. Some were profoundly self-serving, but many were sincere.

Many Bible-believing Christians also struggle with change and tradition. The Pharisees had established codes of conduct that they made equal with Scripture. Don't we still do the same? In trying to maintain our faith against competitors and challenges, don't we resent those who don't conform and who disregard the history of why we do what we do? What human-made rules, policies, and doctrines have we given the same authority as God's Word? Do we reject someone's thought because we don't like his or her background,

training, or personal style? Pharisees exist today. Ask God for insight so as not to be one of them.

The delegation was from Jerusalem, the center of Jewish authority, and was made up of Pharisees (who advocated minute obedience to the Jewish law and traditions) and scribes (also called teachers of the law—professional interpreters of the law who especially emphasized the traditions). As these religious leaders scrutinized Jesus and his disciples, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands. For his Roman readers, unfamiliar with Jewish customs, Mark explained that “defiled hands” meant that they were eating without first washing their hands. This referred not to washing for cleanliness, but to a particular kind of washing that made a person “ceremonially clean” before eating.

**7:3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.)** Mark explained for his Roman readers why the disciples eating with “defiled” hands was such a point of contention with the Pharisees. This ceremonial washing cleansed a person from any defilement he or she might have contacted without knowing it. The Pharisees did not want to eat with defiled hands, for they believed that they then would become defiled. They scrupulously followed this law, thinking that this ceremony would cleanse them from any contact they might have had with anything considered unclean.

The origin of this ceremonial washing is seen in the laver of the tabernacle, where the priests washed their hands and feet prior to performing their sacred duties (Exodus 30:17–21). That was part of God’s law. But oral tradition extended this law (“they shall wash with water so that they will not die” Exodus 30:20 NIV) to all Jews to be performed before formal prayers and then before eating. Thus, before each meal, devout Jews performed a short ceremony, washing their hands and arms in a specific way. But this was tradition, not a requirement of God’s law.

Jesus discerned that the Pharisees’ purpose was not to get clean, but to keep up appearances, to demonstrate that they were not Gentiles, and to outdo the common people in priestlike devotion. Are we like the Pharisees? Do we reduce spiritual Christianity to legalism or to empty

patterns, adhere to them rigidly, but give our willful thought life full reign?

Mark's statement that all the Jews followed this practice is a generalization of Jewish custom. As mentioned in 7:1-2 above, the common people did not follow all the minutiae of the tradition of the elders. This ceremonial washing was not part of God's law, but was instead part of the rules and regulations added later. The "tradition of the elders" refers to the oral interpretation of God's laws, interpretations that affected every aspect of Jewish daily life. The elders of earlier generations (members chosen from the older people to be part of the Sanhedrin, the most powerful religious and political body of the Jewish nation) passed along this oral tradition until, in the third century B.C., it was collected and written down, eventually forming the foundation of the Jewish Talmud. As such, the tradition of the elders was made up of oral laws originated by Jewish religious leaders. Jesus came into direct conflict with these traditions, explaining to these self-righteous religious leaders that "you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition" (Matthew 15:6 NIV). By their scrupulous observance of minute traditions and rituals, they had completely lost their perspective on the reason the law of God had been given: to bring God's kingdom to earth, to provide reconciliation between God and his people, and to bring peace (shalom).

## **SERIOUS RELIGION**

Whenever people take religion seriously, they try to simplify its mystery and conquer its unknowns by building rituals designed to appease or even control the gods. The Pharisees thought that if they could only live perfectly, even God would have to respect them. How futile to try to control God. Jesus knew that these rituals actually obscured God and misled people about their basic spiritual needs. How many add-on rules and rituals do you impose on young people or new converts who want to know God? How many formulas have you added to the Bible and made them law? The Pharisees' problems can be as current as last night's church board meeting ... if we don't watch out!

**7:4 (When they come from the marketplace they do not eat**

**unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)** Mark explained this Jewish ceremonial cleansing ritual a bit further for his Roman audience. The religious leaders were aware that in daily business they might unknowingly come into contact with a Gentile or an unclean Jew and thereby become defiled. If they were defiled, they would be unable to perform their religious duties. This would be inevitable in the marketplace with all its busy jostling of people. Thus, upon return from the market, they would not eat until they washed—that is, performed the ceremonial cleansing. This washing was not to clean dirty hands; it was a ceremonial washing to cleanse them from their contact with defiled “sinners” or Gentiles.

Mark encapsulated the rest of the convoluted rituals regarding cleansing by briefly explaining that the devout leaders observed many other traditions, including laws about how to wash their dishes. There were laws for everything; no wonder the common people didn’t bother themselves with strictly following them. But the religious leaders kept all these laws because they believed their “cleanliness” equaled “godliness.” In their minds, keeping these laws showed their devotion and service to God. But Jesus could not have disagreed more.

**7:5 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”** Picking up from 7:2, Mark continued the narrative. The Pharisees and scribes, having “noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands,” asked Jesus why they were doing this. Notice that the Pharisees themselves realized that this was a tradition of the elders, but they believed that this tradition had the same authority as God’s law. Their underlying question was, “If you are really a rabbi, as holy and righteous and versed in the law as we are, then you should know that we don’t eat without first ceremonially washing our hands. We won’t attack you personally, but since your disciples aren’t washing, you obviously haven’t taught them what’s important. Maybe you don’t even know this law. That makes you no better than a common sinner, certainly not a rabbi whom all these people should be following!”

**7:6-7 He answered and said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites.”** Jesus answered not their spoken



question, but their underlying one, by quoting the Scripture that they claimed to know so well. The Greek word translated well means “beautifully, excellently.” The great prophet Isaiah had written beautifully correct words describing these religious leaders.

## **GREAT TRADITIONS**

People who strongly oppose all tradition are misguided. Good traditions give us a sense of time and place, a home base. Religious tradition helps us understand who we are.

Great traditions shine a spotlight on God’s Word, move us to obedient service, and help our hearts sing the joy of freedom in Christ. They should explain and reinforce the teachings of God, not be screens that block out the light. God’s Word should always be the focus, and tradition a means of making that Word lively.

Celebrate your traditions with the prayer that Christ would be exalted. Change your tradition when it becomes king or when it amplifies a substitute for God’s Word.

Jesus blasted these self-righteous leaders with one word; he called them hypocrites. They must have been enraged to be addressed that way by such a person. The Greek word hypocrites is made up of hupo, meaning “under,” and krino, meaning “to judge.” Thus a hypocrite is one who makes judgment from under a cover. The Pharisees pretended to be holy and close to God, thus judging all other people as sinners. But what they pretended on the outside was not true on the inside.

## **IT’S TRADITIONAL**

Many traditions are good. Some religious traditions can add richness and meaning to life. But we must not assume that certain traditions are sacred because they have been practiced for years. God’s principles never change, and his law doesn’t need additions. Traditions should help us understand God’s laws better, not become laws themselves. If your tradition no longer serves a valid purpose, don’t be afraid to drop it.

## **Jewish Traditions Summary**

The Jewish tradition identifies 613 commandments, or mitzvot, found in the Torah, which is the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). These commandments cover a wide range of laws, including moral and ethical laws, rituals, and ceremonies. They encompass various aspects of daily life, worship, the priesthood, and personal conduct among others.

The 613 commandments are traditionally divided into two categories: 248 positive commandments, which command to perform certain actions, and 365 negative commandments, which command to abstain from certain actions. This division is symbolic, with the positive commandments representing the parts of the human body, and the negative commandments representing the days of the solar year.

The understanding and interpretation of these commandments have been a central part of Jewish religious life. The rabbis of the Talmudic period devoted much study to these laws, discussing their implications and how they should be applied. This discussion is recorded in the Talmud, a central text of Rabbinic Judaism.

Deuteronomy 6:25 encapsulates the significance of these commandments: "And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us." This verse highlights the importance of obedience to God's commandments in Jewish faith and practice.

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The Jewish traditions, including the interpretation and elaboration on the 613 commandments found in the Torah, are primarily recorded in the Talmud and the Midrash. These works are central to Rabbinic Judaism and offer a comprehensive account of Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs, and history.

**1. Talmud:** The Talmud is a foundational source for Jewish law and tradition. It has two components:

- The Mishnah: Compiled around 200 CE by Rabbi Judah the Prince, the Mishnah is the first written recording of the Oral Torah. It organizes and codifies discussions and laws into six orders, covering various aspects of Jewish life and law.

- The Gemara: The Gemara is a commentary on the Mishnah and discusses its teachings in detail. There are two versions of the Gemara – the Babylonian Talmud and the Jerusalem Talmud – compiled in Babylonia and the Land of Israel, respectively. The Babylonian Talmud, completed around 500 CE, is more comprehensive and is the version more widely studied and followed in Jewish life.

**2. Midrash: The term “Midrash”** refers to a genre of rabbinic literature that provides commentary on the Hebrew Bible. Midrash comes in two main forms:

- Halakhic Midrashim (concerned with laws), which provide legal interpretations and elaborations on the commandments in the Torah.
- Aggadic Midrashim (concerned with narrative), which explore biblical narratives, offering ethical, theological, and spiritual insights.

These texts have played a crucial role in the preservation and practice of Jewish traditions throughout the centuries. They are studied continuously in various Jewish communities around the world, providing guidance, wisdom, and insight into the Jewish way of life as instructed by the Torah and elaborated upon by rabbis over generations.

The matters of the solar year and its significance are deeply rooted in the wisdom and observances that have been passed down through generations. While the Bible itself primarily focuses on the narratives, laws, and prophecies that guide the faith and practice of its followers, it establishes a framework upon which later Jewish teachings, including those found in the Talmud, would build.

The solar year, which governs the cycle of seasons and agricultural practices, is acknowledged in the Bible through the celebration of festivals and holy days that align with the agricultural calendar of the ancient Near East. For example, “Three times a year you are to celebrate a festival to me” (Exodus 23:14), with these festivals often tied to seasonal events such as the harvest.

The Talmud, a central text in Rabbinic Judaism that expounds upon the laws and teachings of the Torah, delves deeper into the calculations and considerations of the lunar-solar calendar. It discusses at length the intercalation of months and the adjustment of the calendar to

ensure that festivals fall in their appropriate seasons, thus relating directly to the solar year. This is particularly evident in the tractate Sanhedrin, which discusses the establishment of the new month based on the moon's cycles and the necessity of adding a leap month in certain years to reconcile the lunar calendar with the solar year, ensuring that Passover, for instance, always falls in the spring as commanded in the Torah.

The Talmud's discussions reflect a profound engagement with the natural world, guided by the biblical mandate to observe God's commandments through time-bound rituals. In doing so, it ensures that the spiritual and communal life of the Jewish people remains in harmony with the solar year and the rhythms of the earth.

The Oral Law (Torah Shebe'al Peh) in Judaism refers to the body of interpretations, teachings, and laws that were initially transmitted orally from generation to generation, complementing the Written Law (Torah Shebichtav) given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. This Oral Tradition encompasses explanations and details not explicitly mentioned in the Torah, guiding how its commandments are to be applied and understood in daily life.

The origins of the Oral Law are rooted in the biblical injunction found in Exodus 18:20, where Moses is instructed to "teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way wherein they must walk, and the work that they must do." While the Written Law contains the foundational laws and commandments, the Oral Law is essential for interpreting and implementing these commandments correctly.

### **Key components of the Oral Law include:**

**1. Explanations of the Torah's Commandments:** Detailed instructions on how to observe the commandments, such as the procedures for sacrifices, the specifics of Sabbath observance, dietary laws, and the rituals of purity and impurity.

**2. Legislative Measures:** Rabbinical enactments (gezeirot), customs (minhagim), and decrees made to safeguard the Torah's commandments, adapt to new circumstances, or enhance spiritual

and communal life.

**3. Ethical Teachings and Wisdom:** Guidance on moral conduct, justice, compassion, and the pursuit of wisdom, often articulated in the form of maxims, parables, and discussions of biblical narratives.

The Oral Law was transmitted orally for centuries to ensure flexibility and adaptability in its interpretation and application. However, after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE and the subsequent dispersal of the Jewish people, there was a risk that the Oral Law might be forgotten. To preserve it, Rabbi Judah the Prince compiled the Mishnah around 200 CE, marking the first major written codification of the Oral Law. This was followed by further discussions and commentaries that resulted in the Gemara, and together, the Mishnah and the Gemara form the Talmud, the central text of Rabbinic Judaism and the primary source of the Oral Law.

The Oral Law continues to be a vital aspect of Jewish life and learning, providing the framework within which the Torah is understood and practiced in the diverse contexts of the Jewish experience throughout history.

**“As it is written: ‘This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”** The Pharisees and scribes also knew this Scripture by memory, but evidently they never had applied it to themselves. The prophet Isaiah criticized hypocrites (Isaiah 29:13), and Jesus applied Isaiah’s words to these religious leaders. This people begins the quotation from Isaiah 29:13. Mark’s version resembles more closely the ancient Greek translation of the Old Testament known as the Septuagint and is not exactly the same as the Hebrew text of Isaiah, though the substance is the same. The religious leaders might say all the right words and give lip-service to God, but their hearts were far from God.

While the scribes and Pharisees may have been well-intentioned in their observance of Jewish rituals and traditions and in their attempts to honor God, Jesus attacked their true heart condition. They had lip-worship but sadly lacked in heart-worship. Instead of the godliness they attempted to portray, they were actually far away from God. The problem: The authority for their teaching was human (the

commandments of men), and they taught their human-made rules as though they were given by God. Their focus on minute laws and rules of everyday life caused them to forget the scope of God's law and what it meant for the people. As leaders, they were especially culpable, for they should have been teaching the people about God. Instead, they looked down on the people as ignorant sinners and spent their time busily staying pure. Isaiah explained that their worship was in vain. They worshiped for appearances, not out of love for God. When people claim to honor God while their hearts are far from him, their worship means nothing. It is not enough to act religious. A person's actions and attitudes must be sincere.

### **THE GREAT PRETENDERS**

Hypocrisy is pretending to be something you are not and have no intention of being. Jesus called the Pharisees hypocrites because they worshiped God for the wrong reasons. Their worship was not motivated by love but by a desire to attain profit, to appear holy, and to increase their status. We become hypocrites when we (1) pay more attention to appearance or reputation than to character, (2) carefully follow certain religious practices while allowing our heart to remain far away from God, and (3) emphasize our virtues and others' sins.

**7:8 “You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”** The religious leaders had done the very thing they had tried not to do. Jesus charged that they had abandoned God's law (the word for “abandon” could also be translated “disregard, send away from oneself”). They had supposedly devoted their lives to protecting the law; in reality, they had left the commandment of God behind in order to hold to human tradition. They may have been able to keep both their traditions and God's law, but they had become so zealous for the traditions that they had lost their perspective and had altered and missed the point of God's law entirely. Jesus also charged that they were doing this on purpose (7:9), for they had tried to win praise from people for their displays of piety as they kept all the rituals.

**7:9 Then he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition!”** Jesus restated his indictment of the scribes and Pharisees. Not only had they abandoned God's commandments while holding tightly to

their traditions (7:8), they had rejected God's commandments outright for the same reason. The Greek word translated "rejecting" is *atheteo*, meaning something that had been laid down or prescribed was being done away with or made void. God had laid down his law, and the Pharisees had made that law void in order to keep their tradition. They had completely lost sight of the merciful and loving intent of God's law as they placed upon themselves and the people minute regulations that were burdensome to keep. They didn't even bother to teach the law; instead, they focused on all their rules and their own piety in keeping their traditions and rules. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in 14:1: "The chief priests and the scribes were looking for a way to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him" (NRSV). Despite all their strict adherence to the rituals, they had completely forgotten about God's command not to murder. Jesus accused these religious leaders of rejecting God's commands even as they kept their own traditions. Next, Jesus gave an example to illustrate how the tradition could be (and was being) used to negate God's law.

### **THE LAST WORD**

The Pharisees added hundreds of their own petty rules and regulations to God's holy laws; then they tried to force people to follow these rules as the "tradition of the elders." These men claimed to know God's will in every detail of life. Some religious leaders today still add rules and regulations to God's Word, causing much confusion among believers. It is idolatry to claim that your interpretation of God's Word is as important as God's Word itself. It is especially dangerous to set up extrabiblical standards for others to follow and give those standards equal authority with the Bible. Instead, look to Christ for guidance about your own behavior, and let him lead others in the details of their lives.

**7:10 "For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' "** Jesus first quoted Moses, an especially relevant choice because the scribes traced the oral law back to him (see Deuteronomy 4:14). Jesus chose an example about people's duty toward their parents. One of the Ten Commandments, Honor your father and your mother (Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 5:16) states that people are to respect their parents in honor of who they are and what they have done. The commandment did not apply just to young

children, but to anyone whose parents were living. Honor includes speaking respectfully and showing care and consideration.

The same law is written negatively in Exodus 21:17, He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death (see also Leviticus 20:9). “Cursing” one’s parents is the opposite of honoring them. It means to speak ill of, to ridicule, to abuse verbally. The natural result of such behavior is that the person will not honor his parents for who they are, will not speak respectfully, and will certainly show no care or consideration to them. Such action carried a severe penalty—a person who cursed his parents could be put to death.

The scribes and Pharisees knew Moses’ words backward and forward. They knew these laws. But they found a way to break them while still looking pious.

**7:11-12 “But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: ‘Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban’ (that is, a gift devoted to God), then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.”**

Jesus then went on to explain how the Pharisees had found a way to completely sidestep God’s command to honor parents. The words but you say demonstrated their complete opposition to what Moses had written (7:10).

The practice of Corban (literally, “offering”) meant that a person could dedicate something to God for his exclusive use. Thus, it was reserved for sacred use and withdrawn from profane or ordinary use by anyone else. Some people had done this, but in such a way that they didn’t give it to the temple. Instead, they only legally excluded their parents from using it. They could dedicate money to God’s temple that otherwise would have gone to support their parents (based on Deuteronomy 23:21–23 and Numbers 30:1–16). Thus, a man could simply take the vow of Corban, saying that all his money was dedicated to God. He could still use his money any way he chose, but could use his Corban vow as an excuse not to give any money to help his needy parents. Corban had become a religiously acceptable way to neglect one’s parents, circumventing responsibility to them. Although the action—dedicating money to God—seemed worthy and no doubt conferred prestige on the giver, these religious leaders were ignoring God’s clear command to honor parents. Even worse, this was an



irrevocable vow. If a son later decided that he needed to help his parents, the Pharisees would not permit it—you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. The money was “dedicated,” and nothing could change that. No Pharisee would surrender the purse. These actions were extremely selfish. Jesus rightly described the Pharisees as going to great pains to set aside God’s law.

## **FAMILY MATTERS**

The Pharisees’ selfish reasons had made rigid a law that twisted God’s higher purpose. They had used one law to play against another with the motive of making it easier on themselves. Some Christians still do this. They rationalize using up all their finances and let aging family members go on welfare. While we should give money and time to God, we must never use God as an excuse to neglect our family responsibilities. Helping a family member in need is one of the most important ways to honor God (see 1 Timothy 5:8).

### **7:13 “Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”**

The Corban vow effectively put tradition above God’s Word. To be able to exempt oneself from one of God’s commandments by taking a human vow meant that the Pharisees had attempted to nullify or make void the word of God. The Pharisees took advantage of this law themselves and taught it to the young men in their schools, handing it down to the next generation.

Jesus added that the Pharisees did many things like that. This was only one example of the premeditated selfishness of these religious leaders who set themselves above all the people and, in effect, destroyed the laws that they attempted to keep (we have already read about their ridiculous commands regarding the Sabbath, 3:1-6). In his example, Jesus clarified to these hypocritical religious leaders that God’s law, not oral tradition, was the true authority over people’s lives.

## **THE NULL PRINCIPLE**

Making add-on rules that serve special interests and thwart God’s purposes does more damage than just creating inconvenience or aggravation. In effect, making extra rules calls God’s law null and void. What a serious charge! What a scary indictment!

Be careful about imposing rules on people. Avoid rules that are not clear biblical mandates. Don’t require inflexible allegiance. You may be

getting into more trouble than you think. Be very careful about joining groups that impose secretive rules. Invariably, those rules work to nullify God's work in your life.

**7:14-15 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."** After explaining the true value of "the tradition of the elders" (7:5) in 7:6-13, Jesus addressed the crowd and the disciples regarding the true nature of "defilement." The people had listened to Jesus' stinging accusation of the religious leaders; here Jesus called the crowd to listen ... and understand, for he would make his final point and have the final say in this debate. The Pharisees thought that to eat with defiled hands meant to be defiled (7:5). Jesus explained that the Pharisees were wrong in thinking they were acceptable to God just because they were "clean" on the outside. He explained that defilement is not an external matter (keeping food laws, washing ceremonially, keeping Sabbath requirements), but an internal one.

There is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile refers directly to the Pharisees' question about the disciples eating with "defiled" hands. A person does not become morally defiled by eating with hands that have not been ceremonially washed. Instead, the opposite is true: The things that come out are what defile a person. The condition of a person's heart will be revealed by his or her words and actions—thus, those actions, "the things that come out," are what defile (or reveal true defilement). Sin begins in the heart, just as the prophet Jeremiah had said hundreds of years before: "The heart is devious above all else; it is perverse—who can understand it? I the LORD test the mind and search the heart, to give to all according to their ways, according to the fruit of their doings" (Jeremiah 17:9-10 NRSV).

The Pharisees should have known this. Many times in the Old Testament God had told his people that he valued mercy and obedience based on love above merely observing rules and rituals (see 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Psalms 40:6-8; 51:16-19; Jeremiah 7:21-23;

Hosea 6:6; Amos 5:21–24; Micah 6:6–8). Jesus explained his words more fully to his disciples in 7:17–23.

**Resources:** Rev. Brad Standfest, Bruce B. Barton, Mark, Life Application Bible Commentary

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## **Sermon Notes:**

**Several weeks ago in our Series:** Supernaturally Transformed I talked about growing Deep Roots in Christ...

### **Listening to that Sermon in conjunction with todays would be of Great Value (Wk 6)**

If you're interested in Listening to it Here are the AVC Connections: FB, YouTube, and Church APP

#### **Scripture says this:**

“May the God of all hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Romans 15:13)

**Furthermore Ephesians 3:16-19 says this:**“I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”“

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**Being filled with the Holy Spirit** and the Power of Christ in us is the key for Christians to live Supernaturally Transformed...

**The Question I have for us this morning is this: Can we Hinder Supernatural Transformations in our lives?**

**Did God grant us the ability to choose?**

**The Ability to choose** is one of the greatest gifts God has given us... (No AI Automation)  
Think about this...

**Where you're at in Life Today...** Has all come through choices you have made (with some exceptions)  
No one told you the color of the car you drive... You chose it...  
No one told you to Eat that donut for Breakfast you chose to...

**We have all made some Bad Choices** in the Years of our lives haven't we?

**The Fact is...** Some Big Biblical Characters also made bad choices...  
Scripture says King David was a man after God's own heart

**As King of Israel** one night David walked out on the roof of his palace and saw a woman bathing

**(Short Story of David & Bethsheba)**

**David later repented** of his Sins to God... You can Read his Repentance in Psalm 51  
God fully forgave David of his sins, but David had to live with the Consequences...

**Listen...** We can't do whatever we want and expect to walk in Supernatural Transformation.

**Our world is offering** us more choices than ever before to do whatever the Hell we want (Not cursing I mean literal hell) ...

**Sadly, there are Pastors & Ministries caving into Woke Ideology...**

**Sadly, there are Christians caving into Wokism...**

**If you're wondering what is wokism?**

Wokism is a System or Agenda put in place in a society to accept and tolerate unbiblical truths.

**What happens in this type of society?** People's hearts grow further & further away from God...

**Did you know that a large part** of the Religious Leaders of Jesus' Day turned woke?

**Let me share some of Jesus' Rebuke** ... "Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees you hypocrites! You travel over land and sea to convert people; and when they become one, you make them twice the son of hell as you are... you blind guides... on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness..." (Mt. 23 excerpts)

### **Read Mark 7:1-5**

Let me explain the rebuke from the religious leaders on Jesus...

#### **I quote from multiple theological sources:**

"The Jewish traditions were developed by Religious Leaders... who came up with 613 commandments and traditions and oral commands not found in the bible. 248 of them were positive commands to perform certain actions. 365 were negative commands to abstain from certain actions. The Positive commands are symbolic representing parts of the body... And the negative commands representing the day of the solar year. They encompass various aspects of daily life, worship the priesthood, personal conduct, ethics, philosophy customs and history. Most of these commandments are found in the Talmud & Midrash literature."

### **Listen to Jesus' Response: Read Mark 7:6-13**

#### **Spiritual Applications for Obtaining Supernatural Transformation:**

- Pray before making hard choices in your life
- Adhere to God's Word and not man's wokisms
- Don't be tricked into believing unbiblical truths
- Be alert... The worldwide agenda will attempt to change your Christian Worldview
- When in doubt... Find it out... In the Bible

### **Devotional Questions**

**Read Mark 7:1-13 and answer and reflect on the devotional questions:**

**1. What is the significance of Jesus' rebuke** of the Pharisees and teachers of the law for prioritizing human traditions over God's commandments? Consider how this might apply to modern practices such as the wokisms we are seeing today... that overshadow God's commands.

**2. Jesus quotes Isaiah, saying,** "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me." (Mark 7:6) Reflect on the state of your own heart. Are there areas in your life where your actions might not reflect your heart's true position towards God?

**3. In what ways might we be "nullifying the word of God by your tradition"** (Mark 7:13) today? ... And what ways do you see our American society nullifying God's True Word?

**4. Jesus focuses on the heart rather than external rituals.** How does this passage challenge you to evaluate your own spiritual practices? Are there rituals, practices or bad habits they have hindered your relationship with Jesus Christ?

**5. Consider the implications of Jesus' teaching** for understanding what truly defiles a person. How does this change your perspective on sin and righteousness?

**6. How can we ensure that our worship and service to God are based on His commandments** and not merely on human traditions or interpretations? Reflect on steps you can take to prioritize Scripture in guiding your faith expressions.

**7. In what ways can you cultivate a heart** that is truly close to Christ, honoring Him not just with words but with sincere actions and attitudes?