

A talk given by David Wilde on 12 September 2021

Mark 7:1 to 23 --- That Which Defiles

Verse	Passage	Thought
1	The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus	<p><u>Let's Pray</u></p> <p><u>Background</u> Jesus and his disciples were in the region around the sea of Galilee, some considerable distance from Jerusalem and yet Pharisees and Teachers of the law had come to question him. Jesus' reputation and influence had more than caught their attention. AND, they didn't like what they saw. They saw a flagrant disregard for their laws and traditions.</p> <p>So, they questioned Jesus about this. Why was he allowing it to happen? After all traditions are important, aren't they?</p> <p><u>Traditions</u> We have a tradition on Christmas morning. We gather round the Christmas tree and Tim and Jess have a photo taken, regardless of how late they stayed up the night before, and then we open the presents one at a time. Several days later, at least it seems that way, we get ready for church, or I move on to the final preparations for Christmas Dinner.</p> <p>So why was this particular tradition important to the Pharisees? It stems from instructions given to the Israelites by Moses after they had left Egypt. It relates to two important aspects of Jewish life. The eating of food with their hands and The symbolism of being spiritually cleansed</p> <p>The Pharisees however, had taken these traditions to a new level. Not complying to this rule was akin to breaking one of the Ten Commandments.</p> <p>They had lost focus on what the instructions were really about.</p> <p>The outward appearance was more important. What people would think rather than what would honour God.</p> <p>So, what can we learn from this? What traditions do we have as Christians?</p>
2	and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.	
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.	
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.	
5	So, the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?"	

		<p>Do we have any that take us away from our focus on Jesus?</p> <p>Do we have any that prevent people outside the church from wanting to find out more?</p> <p>Do we put conditions on people before we allow them to get involved with an activity?</p> <p>Do we welcome people into the church regardless of how they appear?</p> <p>Do we expect people to behave in a certain manner before we accept them?</p> <p>All these and many more are judgements that are based on outward appearance and not on their heart towards God.</p> <p>When we do it, we act like the Pharisees</p>
6	<p>He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:</p> <p>"These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.</p>	<p><u>What did Jesus say?</u></p> <p>In verse 6 Jesus tells us that the important that the important thing is the state of our hearts. The focus of which should be towards God.</p> <p>Following human rules cannot gain us God's favour. WHY?</p>
7	<p>They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.'</p>	<p>In John 3:16 it says: For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.</p>
8	<p>You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions."</p>	<p>That <u>whosoever</u> means whoever is believing in Jesus.</p> <p>It's not conditional on following man-made rules because, it's based on Faith.</p> <p>In other words, it's an unconditional gift. We call this GRACE.</p> <p>We need to understand what God's will is for our lives and we need to focus on getting to know Jesus better in order to have a greater impact on the world in which we live.</p>
9	<p>And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!</p>	<p>Jesus takes it a stage further and gives an example of how the Pharisees have swapped God's commands for their own traditions.</p>
10	<p>For Moses said, 'Honour your father and mother,' and,</p>	<p>You've told people that they don't have to, or that they shouldn't, look after their parents financially, rather</p>

	'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'	give that money to the temple treasury, which by the way, they controlled.
11	But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)—	If you do this, you'll be doing what God wants.
12	then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother.	Jesus has a different perspective on this practice. Looking after your Father or Mother, especially in their old age, or if they had been widowed, is a duty placed on the children by God through Moses.
13	Thus, you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."	Jesus was angry with them because they as Shepherds of Gods flock were not only abusing their responsibilities but also manipulating the situation for their own ends. They were encouraging the people to follow their corrupt practices.

14	Again, Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this.	<p><u>What's Jesus' reasoning behind this?</u></p> <p>Going back to ceremonial washing. Dirty hands, bad breath, tatty clothes, BO, Bad language etc. are not necessarily and indicator of bad heart.</p> <p>A Lady who used to come to this church many years ago was on a retreat working with young people, one of whom was as fowl mouthed as you could get. After on even meeting he came in and said to them: Do you know what gods told me to stop doing? They naturally thought it would be swearing, but he said, using quite a few swear words in the process, that God wanted him to stop gossiping. We need to rethink how we view people and in particular we need to be so in touch with Jesus that we gain his perspective and stop using our own.</p> <p>I'm no better than anyone else in this regard</p>
15	Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them."	
16	After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable.	The disciples hadn't understood this at all. Probably another reason why Jesus was so upset with the Pharisees.
17 18	"Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them?"	The flock they were to look after had without doubt taken on board that the outward appearance mattered, even if they couldn't match it.
19	For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)	Jesus wanted them to see that external physical practices don't matter.
20	He went on: "What comes out of a person is what defiles them.	How we act, what we think and the intentions of our heart are what God looks at.
21	For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts	Look at verses 21 and 22

	come—sexual immorality, theft, murder,	<p>All these things are a true indicator of a person who is unclean, but even this person can be loved and forgiven and renewed by God.</p> <p>Jesus tells us not to judge people, why?</p> <p>Because like the boy I told you about and like you and me, we are a work in progress.</p> <p>Even the dirtiest person can be cleaned.</p> <p>If it's the outside, it's soap and water.</p> <p>If it's the inside, it's the Holy Spirit.</p> <p>There are two main things to get from this passage:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Focus on developing a deeper relationship with Jesus 2. Allow God to make any judgements regarding others, he's a lot more qualified. <p>Let's close with a prayer.</p>
22	adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.	
23	All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”	