

Sermon Series: Book of Mark  
Sermon: **Heart Issue**  
Scripture: Mark 7:1-23  
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church  
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Let's pray together.

In the book of Mark we don't have as many parables and teaching from Jesus as we do in the other gospels. In the last couple of chapters of Mark we saw the glory and majesty and power of Jesus Christ. He calmed a storm. He cast out demons from the man of the tombs. He healed a woman with a blood disease. He raised Jairus's daughter from the dead. He fed 5000 and walked on water.

**Mark wants us to know who Jesus is.**

In chapter 7 we have a transition to Jesus again giving some instruction and a rebuke to the Pharisees and Scribes. We saw this before in Chapter 2. There he was questioned about fasting and the Sabbath.

So, what's going on now and why does Mark come back to this?

Let's read Mark 7:1-5

**7:1 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, 2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3** *(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, 4 and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.)* **5 And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”**

There's the question and the conflict..in verse 2 and 5, same thing....

**“Why do your disciples eat with unwashed hands... defiled hands....and not walk according to the tradition of the elders?”**

We need to understand what is going on here.

First, we need to understand that what they DON'T mean is that their hands are dirty and they need to go wash them. What they mean is that their hands are DEFILED. Ceremonially dirty. Contaminated.

The tradition of the elders were rules that were extra-biblical....{outside the Bible}....that religious teachers had passed down through the years to keep themselves 'pure'.

You see, the Pharisees had a good intention that had gone wrong. The Jewish people were supposed to be separate and set apart....different from those around them, but they didn't do it and were punished by God. Now, in trying to make things right....they went to the other extreme. LEGALISM.

They believed that you were right before God by Ethnic separation, that they were saved by keeping themselves from being polluted or contaminated from sinners, and sinners being bad people and non-Jews.

So, they had lots of rules (called the *HALAKHAH*) to make themselves 'PURE' or 'CLEAN' after contact with impurity. Like washing your hands before you eat bread. You might have touched a Roman or an American and so you need to wash or you'll be impure. The food becomes polluted and so do you. Germaphobes in a way. Verse 4 says, If they went to the market, where non-Jews were they would then get 'baptized'. They took a bath to purify themselves.

The issue wasn't that Peter or John had some dirt on their hands. It was that they weren't doing the traditional washing of the hands...the tradition of the elders. It was done a certain way.

The **QUESTION** is: Why don't **you** and your disciples hold to the tradition of the elders?

**ANSWER:** Because your traditions are not God's commandments.

Let's read verses 6,7 and 8.

**6 And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “*This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.*’ 8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”**

There it is.

The traditions of men vs. the commandments of God.

This is a stab. It's a rebuke and it's harsh.

Hypocrites.

You're far from God.

You worship in vain.

Isaiah spoke of YOU!

In verse 8 he says, “You LEAVE the commandment of God.

In verse 9 he says, “You REJECT the commandment of God.

In verse 13 he says, “You MAKE VOID the word of God.

The Scribes and Pharisees were **LEGALISTS** who cared about the outside but not the inside.

They honored God with their lips but not their hearts.

They didn't follow God's commandments but their own traditions. They *added* to God's word and **you cannot add to God's Word without subtracting from it!**

Now, in verse 9-13 Jesus gives them an **example** of how they do this; how they forsake the commandments of God for or by their own traditions.

**9 And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' 11 But you say, 'If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban"' (that is, given to God)— 12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."**

So here's the deal.

**BIBLE** says: "Honor your mother and father and whoever reviles mother and father must surely die."  
Exodus 20:12 & Exodus 21:17

**TRADITION OF ELDERS:** *"I want to 'promise' all my wealth and possessions to the LORD when I die. I want to give it all to God...CORBAN. No one is allowed to touch my wealth cause it has been promised to God*

*and....since I can't break a promise...Mom and Dad, sorry...You can't have any of my money and I can't take care of your financial needs. My money is God's."*

That was their tradition. It was perhaps a good intention, but they'd taken it too far. They would "promise" everything to God and not even Mom and Dad could break the Piggy Bank. But, they did it on purpose so that they didn't have to give their parents their money.

Jesus points out to them one of the ridiculous ways they follow the traditions of the elders and not God's word.

He is saying, **"My disciples and I will follow God's word and not your traditions. You Scribes and Pharisees are concerned with the outside. I care about the inside. You care about lip service and I care about the heart.**

Let's read the rest. Look at verses 14-23.

**14 And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand: 15 There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him." 17 And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding?**

**Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, 19 since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?”** *(Thus he declared all foods clean.)* **20 And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. 21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”**

verse 15...to the people, “The things that come OUT of your **heart** are what defile you.”

verse 20...to the disciples, “What comes out of a person’s **heart** is what defiles him.”

**The real issue is the HEART.**

**Jeremiah 17:9-10 says, “9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? 10 “I the LORD search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”**

**1 Samuel 16:7 says, “For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart.”**

The whole world is trying to figure out how to get clean. How to get right with God. How to get rid of defilement.

Pharisees and Scribes followed the traditions of the elders. The Hindus wash in the Ganges. The Buddhists turn their prayer wheels and say their mantra. Muslims strive to follow the 5 pillars of Islam. Catholics go to confession and take the Eucharist. Baptists in the USA go to church often and don't drink alcohol or smoke. Mormons serve their 2 year mission. Others just hope to be as good as the culture around them.

But the **heart** is the issue.

How do we fix the **heart**?  
How do we get the inside clean?

We can't.

**Only the grace and mercy of God in and through Jesus Christ can do that.**

We need a new heart.  
We need to be reborn.  
We need to be transformed.  
We have sinful and evil hearts.  
All of us.

So, what is our only hope?

## Ephesians 2:1-5

And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>2</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>3</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

**4 But God**, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, <sup>5</sup> even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—