

Recovering the True Intent of the Law
Mark 7:1-23
Series: Christ Our Focus

1. Introduction:

- a. Mark is writing to a non-Jewish audience
- b. What is the Law of God?
- c. What is it the God requires?
- d. Where does sin come from?
- e. What place does tradition hold when compared to the Scriptures
 - i. Differences between inner motives and ceremonial observances
- f. What is morality

2. Verse 1 – From Jerusalem

- a. 90 miles away
- b. This animosity continues
- c. They come to find fault

3. Verses 2-5 –

- a. According to the Old Testament, only priests were required to wash before entering the tabernacle
 - i. Exodus 30:19; 40:13; Leviticus 22:1-6
- b. Hand washing was prescribed for one who had touched bodily discharge
 - i. Leviticus 15:11
- c. As Judaism encounter the gentile culture this ritual of cleanliness took on new significance as a way of maintaining Jewish purity over against gentile culture.
- d. The oral tradition, which was the defining element of Pharisaic and rabbinic Judaism, was to be invalidated by Jesus.
- e. To the Jew the external mattered more but to the Christian the inward motives are what truly matter.
- f. A reading of the Mishna indicated that “cleanness” was a ritual or cultic distinction as opposed to a practical or hygienic distinction.
 - i. 25% of the Mishna is devoted to cleanliness
- g. The Pharisees are highly offended that their traditions, which were akin to the actual word, were being disregarded.

- i. What is at stake is the true intent of the Word of God as juxtaposed to the traditions of the elders.
 - 1. To the Pharisee they are both to equal authority
 - 2. To the Christian, the Word of God is the final authority on any matter.
 - ii. The Mishna called the oral tradition a fence around the Torah.
 - h. Their oral traditions changed and invalidated the meaning of the Word of God.
- 4. Verses 6-9 – a withering rebuke
 - a. Christ demonstrates from the Old Testament that they were in line with what the offenders of the Old Testament were guilty of.
 - i. They thought themselves better.
 - b. They were hypocrites – a play actor wearing two masks.
 - i. They expressed noble sentiments that were devoid of heart intent and commitment.
 - c. Their teachings were about rules and not about following God.
 - d. They do not only reject the commandments of God but they leave them altogether because to them their rules and regulation are of more worth.
 - i. A better feeling of holiness.
 - ii. They want to establish traditions instead of the Word.
 - e. The sufficiency of the Word of God
 - i. **2 Timothy 3:16-17** All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, (17) that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.
- 5. Verses 10:13 – Invalidating the Word
 - a. The Decalogue clearly states –
 - i. **Exodus 20:12** "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.
 - b. Corban – the concept of deferred giving.
 - i. Today a person may will property to a charity or institution as his or her death, though retaining possession over the property and the proceeds or interest accruing from it until then.

- ii. Here a son would declare his property Corban-retaining control until death. However the proceeds would have to be used for himself only. Therefore depriving his aging parents from the substance that they needed.
 - iii. Once declared corban – you had to pay a huge tax to remove it from that status.
 - c. I am amazed how so many people today invalidate the laws of God because of some sort of tradition or thought that they hold to.
 - d. Christ charges the Pharisees with hindering the true intent of the Law.
 - i. You do not permit a man to help his parents.
 - ii. And many such things you do.
- 6. Verses 14-16 –
 - a. Verse 16 – hear me – a command to pay attention
 - i. Faith and understanding results from hearing the words of Christ.
 - b. Verse 15 – It is actually inner impurities that defile the body.
 - i. It is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean not what goes in.
 - ii. Uncleaness and defilement are matters of intention and the heart, not the violation of cultic rituals and formalities.
- 7. Verses 17-20 –
 - a. Explanation to those that are his
 - b. Verse 18 – outside things cannot defile
 - c. Verse 19 – Thus he declares all food clean
 - i. Editorial view from Mark
 - ii. We have freedom
 - iii. **1 Corinthians 8:13** Therefore, if food makes my brother stumble, I will never eat meat, lest I make my brother stumble.
 - iv. Verse 20 – What comes out – what is coming out of you?
- 8. Verses 21-23 –
 - a. Out of the heart of men
 - i. Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

- b. The first six terms occur in the plural, denoting evil acts,
 - i. Sexual immorality – any act outside the bans of matrimony prohibited by God
 - 1. Adultery and fornication are covered here
 - 2. homosexuality is covered here.
 - a. **Romans 1:26-27** For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; (27) and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.
 - 3. any illicit sexual relationship is covered here.
 - 4. **Hebrews 13:4** Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.
 - ii. Theft, murder, greed, malice, and doing evil (wickedness).
- c. The last six occur in the singular, denoting evil attitudes:
 - i. Deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness
- d. These are the things that defile

9. Benediction –

- a. **James 1:13-17** Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God," for God cannot be tempted with evil, and he himself tempts no one. (14) But each person is tempted when he is lured and enticed by his own desire. (15) Then desire when it has conceived gives birth to sin, and sin when it is fully grown brings forth death. (16) Do not be deceived, my beloved brothers. (17) Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.