

THE GOSPEL OF MARK: STRAIGHT TALK ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

7, The Gospel purifies from the corruption of external man-made religious traditions of self-righteous rules and rituals clarifying the internal transformation of the soul by saving faith: self-righteousness by law-works vs God's righteousness by grace-faith, Part 7C

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Introduction: Food fads come and go. I have heard of a time in America when there were no drive-through hamburger portals, no pizzeria space stations, and no mutant chicken wings in 25 different flavors. Awareness of healthy food, nutrition, and medicine research can be a legitimate way of loving our neighbor. However, there is a persistent search to find foods with secret powers that surpass human limitations by transcendence into the spiritual or god-realm. It staggers the imagination that millions of people around the world believe there are foods, i.e. eatable stuff, with secret powers promoted by religions, cults, and popular culture. But repeatedly the Bible warns against these kinds of superstitions, Col. 2:20-23, et al.

Chapter 7, The Gospel purifies from the corruption of external man-made religious traditions of self-righteous rules and rituals clarifying the internal transformation of the soul by saving faith: self-righteousness by law-works vs God's righteousness by grace-faith.

vv. 1-16, Jesus preached the law-word of God and applied the New Covenant Gospel by first clarifying that sin is sourced in the human heart...

- Man-made rules and rituals of outward washings cannot purify the corruption of the sin-hardened heart shown in all manner of self-righteousness disguised as religious piety, cf. Isa. 29; Exodus 20:12, et al., the 5th Commandment.

vv. 17-23, Jesus protested against His disciples confusion over the basics of the New Covenant Gospel clarifying the need for heart purification effecting the supernatural essence of the soul...

- Sin's corruption is not in outward things, e.g. food or drink, personal and household items, clothing and furniture, but sin is sourced in the human heart caused by original and actual sins revealed by God's Law, e.g. re: the 10 Commandments //v. 21, Jeremiah 31:31-34, Ezekiel 36:24-27, et al.

v. 17, In the privacy of a house the disciples, represented by Peter (cf. Matt. 15:15), were questioning Jesus all about the "secret" meaning of the parable:

- Unwittingly the disciples show the influence of those very traditions of the elders by missing the obvious point of Jesus' teaching. The traditions of the elders were inherited teachings, originally passed down orally, about the meaning of Scripture with increasingly elaborate applications of external man-made rules and rituals based on a false interpretive foundation of human-centered abilities and loopholes...
- It would seem the disciples mistakenly assumed Jesus was following in this tradition rather than connecting with His meaning which was to clarify His fulfilling and transferring the Old Covenant law—moral, ceremonial, and judicial—into the New Covenant Gospel...

**The confusion and assumptions of Jesus' disciples here serves as a continuing caution to Christian ministers and believers in the Church that inherited traditions can obscure and even contradict the plain meaning of Scripture*

risking re-interrupting the Gospel with “add-ons”, e.g. social-political causes, moral relativism, political correctness ideologies, superstitions about super-spirituality, etc.,

“Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world [basic commonality of religious impulses which are cosmic/universal] and not according to Christ. For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead [θ ε ό τ η ς/theh-ot'-ace, divinity (abstractly): - godhead, godness, i.e. the unique divine essence] bodily; and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.” Colossians 2:8-10

v. 18, Jesus protested that His disciples did not comprehend, synthesize [α ' σ ύ ν ε τ ο ς/as-oon'-ay-tos , negated form for a condition of understanding that results from bringing together, right reasoning...], bring together the meaning of His teaching by not perceiving, not taking note [ν ο ι ε ω/noy-eh'-o, to exercise the mind (observe), that is, (figuratively): - consider, perceive, think] of His clarifying the difference between the physical and spiritual human condition:

- The disciples demonstrate a persistent disposition among humans. From the Scripture record of original sin resulting from disobeying God’s prohibition by eating the fruit [figs the only fruit mentioned by name in the passage--?] of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, there remains a subconscious tension over the relationship between human life and physical food, ultimately the longing for the Tree of Life no matter how disguised or corrupted by human imagination...

vv. 18b-23, Jesus reverses the false assumptions upon which man-made rules and rituals are based and which especially misinterpret the Old Covenant food laws:

- Jesus profoundly turns the issue inside out by observing sin is not in outward things like food that go into the human body and then processed out again, but sin is inside the human heart from which proceed, come out sinful thoughts, words and actions that while common in human experience are morally evil as revealed by God.

Note: the Scriptures record several times the Apostle Peter struggled over this very teaching, as well as the Jerusalem Council, cf. John 4:27, 31-33; Acts 10:9ff, 11:5ff, 15:7ff, Gal. 2:11ff...

Note: v. 19b, probably an editorial comment by Mark, but does not mean everything eatable is good as nourishing food, but that all kinds of food are cleared to be used anticipated by Jesus’ teaching and validated by the New Covenant Gospel.

- Jesus does not give an exhaustive list, but a grievous sampling of sins sourced from the human heart as **evil thoughts**=designs, a self-dialogue that coaches immoral behavior/actions identified in 6 plural forms as practices:
adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetous desires, wickedness=malicious acts...

followed by 6 singular forms indicating a heart disposition or controlling habits: **deceit**=decoy/bait/lure, **lewdness**=salacious/unrestrained passions, **evil eye**=focus of jealousy and envy (not casting a spell), **blasphemy**=in context probably lesser human to human premeditated slander, gossip, **pride**=arrogance/over and beyond self-importance, **foolishness**=folly/without moral balance/intentionally divisive mindset against the moral law of God, probably used here as a collective conclusion...

**To Christian ministers and believers in the church this Scriptural teaching that sin is sourced in the heart and not in outward things, no matter how elaborately construed, is essential to the right synthesis and notable meaning of the Gospel...*