

Jesus Confronts the Traditions of Men

Matthew 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23

Mark 7:1-5 ¹Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. ²Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. ³For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash *their* hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. ⁴*When they come* from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, *like* the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches. ⁵Then the Pharisees and scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?"

Matt 15:3-9 ³He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? ⁴For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' ⁵But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me *is* Corban"— (that is, a gift *to God*), — ⁶then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. ⁷Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ⁸'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with *their* lips, But their heart is far from Me. ⁹And in vain they worship Me, teaching *as* doctrines the commandments of men.' And many such things you do."

Mark 7:14-16 ¹⁴When He had called all the multitude to *Himself*, He said to them, "Hear Me, everyone, and understand: ¹⁵There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man. ¹⁶If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear!"

Matt 15:12-20 ¹²Then His disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?" ¹³But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone. They are blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch."

¹⁵Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? ¹⁷Do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated? (^{Mk} *thus* purifying all foods) ¹⁸But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. ¹⁹For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, (^{Mk} covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye) blasphemies (pride, foolishness). ²⁰These are *the things* which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

Questions:

1. What is meant by "defiled" or "unwashed" hand? Did the disciples have dirty hands? Why didn't Jesus insist on their washing their hands?
2. What were the traditions of the elders (vs. 3,5)? Were these part of the original OT scriptures or had they been added by the interpretations of teachers of the law?
3. Why wash ("baptism", "immerse") after coming from the marketplace? Why also be required to "wash" cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches?
4. How does Jesus say that because of their tradition they had broken the 4th commandment? What all did the command to "Honor your father and mother" included? How had their tradition made the commandment void?
5. What does the word "Corban" in Hebrew mean and how was it being used by the Jews?
6. Wasn't it unkind for Jesus to call these men hypocrites? Wherein was their hypocrisy? What does Jesus mean "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you" (see Isaiah 29:13)?
7. In what sense had the Pharisees honored God with their lips but not with their hearts?
8. After openly rebuking the Pharisees, Jesus spoke plainly to the multitude. What lesson did He make clear?
9. How did Jesus offend the Pharisees? Why should the disciples be concerned that they were offended?
10. Whom did Jesus call "blind guides"? What does Jesus mean to let them alone? Was He letting them alone? What did Jesus mean by the parable about blind followers of the blind?
11. Why couldn't even Jesus' own disciples including Peter not understand Jesus about what defiles? (vs 15-16)
12. What is the meaning of Mark's statement in vs 19 that Jesus was "thus purifying all foods"? What is the real source of all wickedness according to vs 19-20?