



December 5, 2012

Mark 7:1-37 (NASB)

Commandment vs. Tradition (7:1-13)

¹ The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, ² and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. ³ (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; ⁴ and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) ⁵ The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?” ⁶ And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: ‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME. ⁷ ‘BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’ ⁸ “Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men.” ⁹ He was also saying to them, “You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. ¹⁰ “For Moses said, ‘HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER’; and, ‘HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH’; ¹¹ but you say, ‘If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),’ ¹² you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; ¹³ thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

Inside vs. Outside (7:14-23)

¹⁴ After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, "Listen to Me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man. ¹⁶ ["If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."] ¹⁷ When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable. ¹⁸ And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him, ¹⁹ because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus He declared all foods clean.) ²⁰ And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. ²¹ "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, ²² deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. ²³ "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Secret vs. Public (7:24-37)

²⁴ Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice. ²⁵ But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. ²⁶ Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. ²⁷ And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." ²⁸ But she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." ²⁹ And He said to her, "Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." ³⁰ And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed,

the demon having left. ³¹ Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis. ³² They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him. ³³ Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva; ³⁴ and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!" ³⁵ And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly. ³⁶ And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to proclaim it. ³⁷ They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

Reflection Questions

Mark 7:1-37

1. The Pharisees and scribes had become unable to see the “spirit” of the Law because of the human-made “letter” of the law. They had become consumed by secondary issues, and had lost sight of God true will. Reflect on a time when you’ve lost sight of God’s will by being distracted by secondary issues.

2. God’s will is set in tension with human traditions. What human traditions cause you tension as you try to keep God’s will in focus?

3. The Jews believed that eating certain foods would defile a person, and this would cause judgment by God. There are probably several modern-day examples of this type of legalism. Which ones come to mind?

4. One of Jesus’ main concerns was the condition of the human heart. What are some of the more powerful influences on the human heart? On your heart? What are some things you might do to ensure that what flows from your heart honors Jesus?

5. The conversation between Jesus and the Syrophenician woman is curious. What does this conversation tell you about Jesus and the woman? How do you think you would have responded if you were the woman?

6. What things do you observe in the encounter between Jesus and the deaf and mute man? Though Jesus warned them to keep the healing a secret, they defy Him and proclaim the news. Do you think you would have kept it a secret?

7. Identify one key “take-away” from this passage that you can apply to your life? Reflect on the necessary steps to make that application happen.