

An Evil Eye

Mark 7:1 – 37



~ Our Spiritual Safari is still in Gennesaret carrying the beds of those who are sick and lame. I guess you could call this the safari volunteer program. There are many religious groups amongst us in the world today; and they all have vastly differing beliefs about Who Jesus was and is. Interestingly, God says we have only two groups of people: friends and enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ; those who trust Him - and those who do not! Which group are you in? We really need to examine ourselves today to determine whether we are in the faith - or not.

We moved hurriedly through our last report, but I feel we caught the overall theme - which is that this is a picture of Jesus as God's Servant doing God's will for His plan and purpose! Action is unfolding fast and furious now, and our accounts are all tied up in just a few verses. This would have all appealed to a Roman strong man in that day, by the way. As we have said, Mark is written to the Roman for the strong-minded and strong-willed man. The only question we have for Jesus in this Gospel is: can He get the job done? If He is our Savior, then He can save - and He is the Only One Who can.

In Matthew we examined myriad marvelous milestones reached by the world and the nation Israel in the time period between the Old Testament and the New Testament. In many ways, that gap of time is the most significant historical period for Israel. During this time, the Pharisees, scribes, Herodians and the Sadducees rose to prominence. The Pharisees rose to defend the Jewish way of life amidst a horrendous Roman rule. They hated all foreign influences and they were strict legalists and nationalists. They believed in the Old Testament and they believed in mixing the politics of their day with the law of the Mosaic system to bring in their idea of a restored kingdom of David at that time.

Sadducees were wealthy and socially-minded, but they had no spiritual depth whatsoever. They wanted to get rid of tradition and they rejected the supernatural altogether. They were diabolically opposed to the Pharisees. The Pharisees, of course, accepted the supernatural; and the Old Testament as law. The Sadducees were closely knit to the Greek epicureans. The scribes were the lawyers and they expounded professionally on it; except for that by the time in which we are studying, they were nothing but hair-splitting religious philosophers - more concerned with the letter of the law than with the Spirit of God! This is still a huge problem in the church today; we have a method of splitting hairs in our systems of law that end in philosophical theories that were never intended. We get this from our contemporary law schools; and it's the reason our legal and political system are in the mess they're in! This is what had happened to religion in our Lord's Day. The Herodian's were strictly political, and they only wanted to keep Herod in power – they had no other function or ambition....

1 Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

~ A crisis is brewing around the Person of Jesus in this section of Scripture. We just saw the apostles gather and tell Jesus all the things they had done in the last chapter. Jesus sent them out; they reported back and now there is confrontation between the followers of Jesus and the followers of the Pharisees. Jesus has two groups of people around him now: those who love him and those who hate Him! It has forever been this way. Two ways:

acceptance or rejection! Your daily ritual and church membership mean nothing. What matters is your relationship to Jesus Christ?

Now, this delegation was sent from Jerusalem for the sole purpose of spying on Jesus and collecting evidence of blasphemes. We're looking at the intellectual opponent sent to attempt to trap the Lord Jesus. Jesus defense of Himself is definitely another proof of His deity. Never a man spake as He spake; and that's what the enemy said! These Pharisees had become so involved in going through the rituals of cleansing – baptizing – washing everything in the house, and were so busy with their religion that they forgot the whole purpose of what they were doing was so that a man might be made right with God! They knew nothing about a relationship with the Father that was supposed to have been established! We have too many people today who want to argue religious points when it's the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ we need to be telling others about!

The problem here is not that of etiquette - but the problem is that Jesus didn't hold to their interpretations of rituals that were also, conveniently, their interpretations of the Old Testament. This was all ceremonial cleansing and nothing else; it was not a sanitary measure in any way. For the benefit of the unlearned Roman man, Mark explains that this ritual is peculiar to Israel. Of course, God gave Israel a lot of procedure regarding cleansing. As soon as we return to Leviticus, we'll find out more about the cleansing we saw in Exodus and how it was important. There are great spiritual lessons in cleansing. The problem here is that the Pharisees had built up a tradition based on an aspect of the Mosaic Law which made the whole thing utterly meaningless. Some people actually went as far as to contend that Moses gave these traditions when the law was given! Traditions became interpretations of an interpreted law! Anytime that happens, you're going to have big problems. Of course, there was a huge departure from the intent of the law by Israel....

5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

~ This accusation against the apostles was really an accusation against Jesus. It was a personal attack because the apostles were His followers. Well, Jesus answer to them is not some tender and thoughtful answer designed to be politically correct. Hypocrite is defined as an actor playing a part. These religious rulers were nothing but a group of pious people reciting lines given to them in a script. They were simply going through the motions of a predefined quasi-religio thought pattern and predefined outcome that was meaningless to them; except regarding some future benefit they might receive! They were not interested in God at all and they didn't love Him or care about Him for one moment. The lips and the hearts of the Pharisees may as well have belonged to two separate people! They had no more experience of heart conversion than the tin man in that famous Hollywood play from so long ago; the one where they go to a wizard for a liver and heart – or something like that.

Most self-professing believers today are merely going through a ritual that is a burden to them and means very little, if anything, in their lives. Their hearts have never been changed. If you confess with your mouth and believe in your heart that God has raised Christ from the dead, then thou shalt be saved; but, if those things are genuine, there is going to be a radical change in your thinking and life. It is with the heart that a man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made into salvation. Worship is nothing but empty when the rules of men are substituted for the Word of God. Too many people have some creed or motto or dress - or even their self-appointed "separation" - and it all becomes a matter of tradition as opposed to a personal and direct dealing with the Lord our God. The method of downward decline in a church is always the same: first, a creed is substituted for the Word of God; then, they incorporate man's philosophies and theories and attempt to blend it all together. The next thing you know, the Word of God is non-existent in that pulpit and you have a new denomination and a new ritual. That cycle has happened again and again and again....

7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

~ Jesus gives them an example of what they were actually doing, you see. Moses said for them to honor their father and mother; but this tradition they had manufactured gave an escape clause from that responsibility to their parents. If a man didn't want to help mom and dad – or if he just wanted to be mean – then he would dedicate all his possessions and belongings to the temple; and they called doing that “Corban.” When the man died his estate went to the temple and he was relieved of this responsibility under his tradition - which is absolutely pernicious; and undermines the intent of the law of God which is to honor thy father and thy mother!

Today, there is a huge danger in giving to people who appeal to us. Some people are just combing every available avenue of revenue urging people to give to some group or organization. Well, there are certain responsibilities we have when we are taught the Word of God properly, correctly and completely. Anyone who helps me does so because they want to get the Word of God out to the world – not because of some personal appeal I make to help feed children, baptize in the name of who-knows-what - and it's not because I'm a hard luck story. God makes the Spiritual Safari happen every day and he'll cut off our expedition when and if He's ready to! There is a tremendous danger giving to the wrong thing or with the wrong attitude....

11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:

15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.

16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

~ Now, Jesus is going to demonstrate that Christianity is not some rub-on religion that smells good until it wears off! It's not a salve or something we eat or drink or refrain from eating or drinking, either; the problem in man is found in this list we have following. It's not good. I guarantee you that if you will click through the news stories of the last twenty-four hours, you will find every single one of these defiling sicknesses known to mankind in the world. People are grasping and grabbing for material things as they covet their lives away! Covetousness is idolatry, too, remember! All of these sins are designed to hurt other people. Pretenses are put up as lasciviousness and sensuality rules the day. Envy, slander, pride, evil and foolishness are all encompassed in this upcoming list. All of these are acts performed without regard or respect to ones fellow man nor to God! These are the things that naturally proceed from YOUR heart and mine and these are the reasons Jesus said, "ye must be born again" ~

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.

21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,

22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

~ We move on in our safari to the Syrophenician woman and we have our second visit with her in Mark. Jesus steps out of Israel and out from His own land to speak to this Greek woman, who was a citizen in Tyre, and who has come to Jesus in faith; and Jesus treatment of this woman appears very brutal at first. We met this woman in Matthew under the dispensational interpretation, which reveals the MIRACULOUS accuracy of the four Gospels. This is the conspicuous faith of one person on the outside. Jesus answers her petition raising the question: did Jesus go to that specific area at that specific time for the specific purpose of answering this specific woman's specific needs of faith? I say – yes! Yes, He did....

24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the Sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue;

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

~ Decapolis is a group of ten cities that I'll not name in this report. Some quick homework will reveal their locations! Let's just say we went to them all in our Spiritual Safari expedition through the entire Word of God! Jesus

ministry had already broken all bounds; but after He heals this dumb and blind man, the seal of His Godly personification could no longer be ignored. The pressure on the Lord Jesus at this time is humanely unbearable. The tension of the times and the long, busy days made all of their bodies physically exhausted; and yet the crowds must say, "... He hath done all things well." ~

