

# Tradition!

Mark 7:1-13

## The Hostility of Israel's

- 1) Jesus' claim to forgive sins (2:1-12)
- 2) Jesus' companionship with sinners (2:13-17)
- 3) Jesus' unwillingness to keep their traditions (2:18-22)
  - Especially regarding fasting.
- 4) Jesus' violation of their Sabbath regulations (2:23-3:6)
  - The disciples picking & eating grain (2:23-28)
  - Jesus heals on the Sabbath (3:1-6)
- 3:6 - The Pharisees went out and immediately *began* conspiring with the Herodians against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him.
- 3:22 - The scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons."

## Mark 7:1-13

- 1) The External Nature of Legalism (1-5)
- 2) Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)

## I. The External Nature of Legalism (1-5)

- **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.
- **3-4** – (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, *thus* observing the traditions of the elders; 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.)
  - Cf. Ex. 30:19 - "Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet..."
  - Ex. 40:31-32 - From it Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet. 32 When they entered the tent of meeting, and when they approached the altar, they washed, just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

## I. The External Nature

- **1** – The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem.



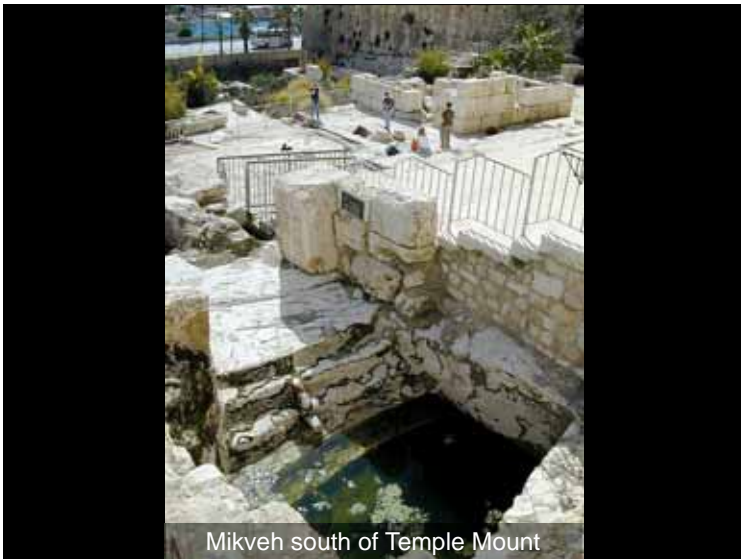




Mikveh



Mikvah south of Temple Mount



Mikveh south of Temple Mount



Mikveh below Triple Gate

## I. The External Nature

- **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?"
  - Cf. Luke 11:38 - And when the Pharisee saw it, he was surprised that [Jesus] had not first ceremonially washed before the meal.

## II. Jesus' Personal Diagnosis of Legalism (6-13)

- The Key Issue: the source of authority!
  - **3** – "the tradition of the elders."
  - **4** – "Many other things which they have received in order to observe."
  - **5** – "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders."
  - **7** – "You teach as doctrines the precepts of men."
  - **8** – "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."
  - **9** – "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition."
  - **13** – "invalidating the Word of God by your tradition which you have handed down."
- The primary message of this account: the spiritual bankruptcy of substituting human tradition for divine revelation.

## Crucial Implications

- 1) Make sure that the only source of authority you trust is the Scripture.
  - Sola Scriptura.
  - The Geneva Confession (1536): "First we affirm that we desire to follow Scripture alone as a rule of faith and religion, without mixing with it any other things which might be devised by the opinion of men apart from the Word of God, and without wishing to accept for our spiritual government any other doctrine than what is conveyed to us by the same Word without addition or diminution, according to the command of our Lord" (Sec. I).

## Crucial Implications

- 2) Be careful not to twist or distort the meaning of Scripture.
  - Jer. 23:36 - "For you will no longer remember the oracle of the LORD, because every man's own word will become the oracle, and you have perverted the words of the living God, the LORD of hosts, our God.
  - 2 Pet. 3:16 – [Paul] as also in all *his* letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.
  - Luther: "We should not be bold in dealing with the Word of God. You had better think: I do not understand these words; but rather than alter them or take something from God's words or add anything to them, I will let them alone and commit the matter to God.... If you do not understand it, then honor it and say: I shall wait till I do understand it.... We should hear God's Word with fear and study in it with humility; we should not pounce upon it with our own notions of what is right.... For there is no jesting with God's Word.... Weigh the words carefully, comparing that which has preceded with that which follows, and be intent on capturing the real meaning of any passage and not on fabricating [your] own dreams.

## Crucial Implications

- 3) Don't let your conscience be bound by anything but the Word of God.
  - Martin Luther at the Diet of Worms (1521): "Unless I am convinced by the testimony of the Scriptures or by clear reason (for I do not trust either in the pope or in councils alone, since it is well known that they have often erred and contradicted themselves), I am bound by the Scriptures I have quoted, and my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not retract anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.... Here I stand. God help me!"