

Mark 7:1-13 – Jesus Takes On Tradition

Leader's Guide

May 5, 2019

1. Read Mark 7:1-13 to familiarize yourself with the passage.

Traditions and Commandments

7 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ² they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³ (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴ and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵ And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?” ⁶ And he said to them, “**Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,**

“ ‘This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
⁷ in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

⁸ **You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”**

⁹ And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! ¹⁰ For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ ¹¹ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, “Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban” ’ (that is, given to God) — ¹² then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, ¹³ thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

2. What are examples you have seen where tradition takes on too much authority?

- Amish – They hold their traditions with in such high esteem that they separate themselves from society, even denying their own children modern medical care.

- Some people make it a tradition to be first in line for the latest Star Wars movie or wait in line for the latest Apple product. This tradition can be a coverup for materialism.

3. Not all traditions are bad. What good traditions are found in the Bible and outside the Bible that are worth maintaining?

- In the Bible, Passover and other Jewish holidays would be good traditions put in place to help Israel remember their history. Communion is a tradition Jesus gave us to follow which brings us back to Jesus being the source of our relationship with God. Baptism is also another biblical tradition which has great symbolism and is worth following.
- Christmas and Easter are not traditions found in the Bible but they are worth following to the extent they point us to Christ.

4. The Roman Catholic Church gives church tradition and the Bible the same level of authority. How has that led the Roman Catholic Church away from the Bible? How can Protestants do the same thing?

- The Roman Catholic Church places the Bible and their traditions on the same level of authority. They even place the authority of tradition over the Bible since they believe it was their traditions that created the Bible. They believe it was their authority that gave the Bible authority. This has led to them claiming a number of things that are not found in the Bible, such as purgatory, which they believe is necessary so we suffer for some of our sins. This tradition is not found in the Bible. Another tradition is the mass. They believe the mass takes away sin, keeps others from committing sins, and gives us grace. The Bible doesn't say this. The Bible tells us all of our grace comes through Jesus, not the tradition of the mass.
- Protestants can also elevate traditions above the Bible. Examples of this include worship styles, dress styles, the look of a church, and the order of worship.

5. What traditions do these verses tell us are important to follow? (1 Corinthians 11:2, 2 Timothy 2:2, 1 Corinthians 11:23).

Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you. 1 Corinthians 11:2 (ESV)

- Paul tells the Corinthians to follow the traditions (teachings) he gave them. While we don't know the details of these traditions, the ones God wants us to follow are found in the Bible. This is a command to follow the traditions of Scripture.

and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also. 2 Timothy 2:2 (ESV)

- These are the traditions of the Bible. Here we are told to make sure we are training other men to follow God's word. This is a leadership training group.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 1 Corinthians 11:23 (ESV)

- The Lord's Supper is a good tradition to follow.

6. What do these verses teach us about traditions we should let go? (Colossians 2:20-22, Colossians 2:8, Galatians 4:9-11, Mark 7:1-9) How do we determine what traditions to keep and what traditions to let go? Are there any traditions you should keep or let go of in your life?

If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations— "Do not handle, Do not taste, Do not touch" (referring to things that all perish as they are used)—according to human precepts and teachings? Colossians 2:20-22 (ESV)

- Paul tells the Colossians to stop following traditions of the world about things they touch that they were told could spiritually contaminate them. None of those traditions were true. Jesus is the truth.

See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. Colossians 2:8 (ESV)

- Traditions or teaching that are based on philosophy, human traditions, and preferences are not things we should follow.

But now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and worthless elementary principles of the world, whose slaves you want to be once more? You observe days and months and seasons and years! I am afraid I may have labored over you in vain. Galatians 4:9-11 (ESV)

- Paul warns about getting caught up in traditional holidays that have nothing to do with Christ. In our culture, these traditions might be holidays like Halloween.

Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" And he said to them, "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, " 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men." And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! Mark 7:1-9 (ESV)

- Paul warns about traditions that get in front of following the Bible.

The best way to determine what traditions we should let go is to ask where they come from. If they are cultural and pulling us away from Jesus, we should not follow those traditions. We don't want any traditions to get in front of our following Jesus.