

Series: God's Life-Changing Truth – Part 3

Mark 7:1-23 ESV

## What Is More Important: What We Think or What God Commanded?

Wednesday, February 25 at 11:00 &amp; 7:00

Second Wednesday of Lent – 2015

During Lent: Wednesday Services at 11 &amp; 7; Meals at 12 &amp; 6

**Introduction:** Dear friends in Christ: Today is part 3 of our series: God's Life-Changing Truth. Today's question: What is more important: what we think **or** what God commanded? Let's think about our lives: *Are we led by our own personal thoughts or by God's Holy Word?* In today's text we are going to see a wrong emphasis – *which is sin against God!* Then Jesus will tell us the truth – *which is a call to repent!*

1. **The Setting:** <sup>1</sup> **Now when the Pharisees gathered to him** [Jesus], **with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem,** <sup>2</sup> **they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed** [they gathered NOT for the purpose of hearing but of arguing; also, the Jews understood the significance of not washing, but Mark adds this explanation for the Greeks]. <sup>3</sup> **(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders,** <sup>4</sup> **and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash** [βαπτίζονται]. **And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing** [βαπτισμούς] **of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.]** // To the Pharisees and scribes, they were not concerned about cleanliness – *freedom from germs*; they saw the lack of

washing as **greater** than breaking the commandments of God!

2. **Two Different Positions:** <sup>5</sup> **And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk** [live, conduct themselves] **according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”** // Their rules of washing had become more important than God's commands ☹️. They did not look at the heart, *but at the outward actions.*
  - a. **Jesus reply:** <sup>6</sup> **And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written,**
    - i. **‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;** // So they spoke rightly, *but believed wrongly!*
    - ii. <sup>7</sup> **in vain** [producing no result] **do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’** [So Jesus said:] <sup>8</sup> **You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”** // So they worshiped outwardly, *but it meant nothing!* And they taught their man-made teachings *as if they were God's teachings!* Dr. Kretzmann wrote: “all people that place the commandments of men on the same level with God's holy Law” are like those Pharisees and scribes (NT 1:200).
  - b. **An example of hypocrisy:** <sup>9</sup> **And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!** <sup>10</sup> **For Moses said** [the LORD thru

Moses], ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’<sup>11</sup> 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)--<sup>12</sup> then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother,<sup>13</sup> thus making void [canceling] the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.” // So they made their own laws which canceled out God’s Laws! Do we sometimes do the same – following our way, not God’s way – with how we love, when we worship, what we give, or how we serve?

3. **Jesus Taught the People:**<sup>14</sup> And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand [Jesus had something very important to say]:<sup>15</sup> There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.”<sup>16</sup> [See the footnote.<sup>1</sup>] // The OT includes various food restrictions (see Lev. 11) about *what goes into the body*, but Jesus turned the focus toward *what comes out of the heart*.

4. **Jesus Taught His Disciples:**

a. About what goes in:<sup>17</sup> And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable [a comparison that was hard to understand].<sup>18</sup> And he said to them, “Then are you also [like the ordinary people] without understanding? Do

you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him,<sup>19</sup> since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) // Jesus kept God’s Law perfectly for everyone; His fulfillment brought an end to *the ceremonial law*, which included food restrictions and animal sacrifices.

b. About what comes out:<sup>20</sup> And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him.<sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery,<sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.<sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” // Is it good to eat healthy? Yes! Will eating with dirty hands lead us to eternal punishment? No! The problem is not with what goes into the body, *but with what comes out of the heart!* The LORD to Israel:<sup>25</sup> “I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you [baptism].<sup>26</sup> And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh [faith].<sup>27</sup> And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules [H.S. & obedience].” (Ezekiel 36 ESV)

**Conclusion:** So, *having new hearts through Jesus*, let us always value God’s Word over our own thoughts! **Amen!**

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<sup>1</sup> Some Greek manuscripts have verse 16: If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.