

Our Lord Exposes the Traditions of the Scribes and Pharisees Mark 7:1-23

by R.A. Torrey

R.A. Torrey's sermon emphasizes the contrast between human traditions and the true essence of worship as taught by Jesus in Mark 7:1-23.

Scripture: Mark 7:6

Topics: "The Condition of the Heart", "Tradition vs. Scripture"

Description

R.A. Torrey emphasizes the contrast between the traditions of the scribes and Pharisees and the true Word of God, illustrating how the Pharisees prioritized human traditions over divine commandments. He highlights that true defilement comes from the heart rather than external actions, urging believers to focus on inner purity and genuine worship. Torrey points out that the Pharisees' hypocrisy, honoring God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him, renders their worship vain. The sermon calls for a return to the authority of Scripture and a heart-centered relationship with God, rather than mere adherence to tradition.

Transcript

(Compare Matthew 15:1-20)

DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Word of God and the Traditions of Men Contrasted, vv. 1-13 Who were gathered together unto our Lord? How far did they come? For what purpose? Did they display their hostility to Him on any other occasion? (2:6; 3:6, 22; 8:11; Luke 5:17-22; 11:53, 54; Matt. 19:3.) Of what did the Pharisees and scribes take a special note (v. 2)? What did they think of that? Why did it appear to them so outrageous that His disciples should eat with unwashed hands (v. 3)? Why were they so scrupulous about the washing of their hands before eating?

Was it ordinary dirt of which they were afraid? Was the washing for hygienic purposes? For what purpose then was it? What did the Pharisees do before they ate every time they came in from contact with ordinary people? (Note the Greek word used in v. 4 for "wash," R. V. margin.) What did they "baptize" beside themselves? What question did the Pharisees and scribes put to our Lord? Was that a proper question? With what question did He reply? (Matt. 15:3.) When ought we to walk according to the tradition of the

elders?

According to our Lord's question, when ought we to transgress the traditions of the elders? Had the scribes and Pharisees ever complained before of the conduct of His disciples? (2:16-18.) What did He call His questioners (v. 6)? Did He on any other occasion call them hypocrites? (Matt. 23:13-15; Luke 11:39-44.) What does "hypocrite" mean? Who had already described these Pharisees and scribes? (Is. 29:13.) With what did they honor God? With what ought they to have honored Him?

What did He through the prophet Isaiah say concerning their hearts? (Compare Ezek. 33:31; 2 Tim. 3:5; Titus 1:16; Jas. 2:14-17.) What does God demand that we give Him? (Prov. 23:26; 4:23.) Which is more important--that we honor God with our heart or with our lips? If our heart is full of love to God, will we also honor Him with our lips? Was their worship acceptable to God? (v. 7; James 1:26.) Why was it vain? How many times in this lesson do we find essentially this same charge brought by our Lord against the Pharisees (vv. 8, 9, 13)?

What had they left (v. 8, R. V.)? For what purpose? Are there any Pharisees and scribes in our churches today? What has superior authority to human tradition, no matter how venerable that tradition may be? What three phrases does our Lord use in describing their treatment of the Word of God (vv. 8, 9, 13)? Are there any who treat the Word of God in that way today? Was it a customary thing in Israel to reject the commandment of God? (2 Kings 16:10-16; Is. 24:5; Jer. 44:16, 17; Ps. 119:126.)

What teaching of the law did our Lord contrast with the teaching of the Pharisees? How had God especially emphasized this law? (Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1, 2.) What did the law of Moses require should be done with those who spoke evil of father or mother? (v. 10; Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Deut. 27:16; Prov. 20:20; 30:17.) What does our Lord here call "the Word of God" (v. 13)? Had He quoted from any other part of the Pentateuch beside the Ten Commandments? What does He then call the law of Moses?

Did He ever teach on any other occasion that the law of Moses was the inerrant Word of God? (Matt. 5:18.) Are there any who today say it is not the Word of God? Between whom then must we make our choice? If any one speaks not according to the law and the testimony why is it? (Is. 8:20; Jer. 8:8, 9.) 2. Inward and Outward Defilement Contrasted, vv. 14-23 After having answered the question of the Pharisees, whom did our Lord call to Himself? What did He bid them do? To whom does that command come today?

What will be the result if we do not hear Him? (Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 3:22, 23.) Is it enough to hear? How alone can we understand? (1 Cor. 2:14; John 16:12, 13; 1 John 2:20, 27.) What cannot defile a man? What does defile a man? Why does the food which enters into him not defile him? Why does that which proceeds from him defile him? What law had taught that some kinds of food did defile the one who ate them? (Lev. 11:42-47.) What lesson had God intended to teach by this Levitical law?

Why was it no longer binding? (Col. 2:16, 17; Ro. 10:4; Eph. 2:14, 15.) What may a Christian eat without defilement? (1 Cor. 10:25; 1 Tim. 4:3-5; Titus 1:15; Heb. 13:9.) Which is more important--what a man puts into his mouth or what comes out of his heart? (Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:34.) What is it important that we keep pure? (Gal. 5:22, 23.) If the heart is filled with the Spirit, will we be in bondage to the ordinances and prescriptions of men? (Ro. 8:14, 15.) Did the disciples at first understand our Lord's teaching (v. 17)?

What effect had their ignorance upon Him? Has He any similar reason to be surprised at us? What significant change does the Revised Version make in the closing words of v. 19? Who had to be taught

this same lesson by a vision from heaven? (Acts 10:9-17.) What are the things that come out of the human heart (vv. 21-23)? What does this teach us about the unregenerate heart? Have we similar teaching regarding the human heart elsewhere in the Bible? (Gen. 6:5; 8:21; Ps. 14:1, 3; 58:2, 3; Jer. 4:14; 17:9; Matt. 23:25-28; Luke 16:15; Acts 8:22; Ro. 8:7, 8; Gal. 5:19-21.) In what way is the exceeding wickedness of covetousness brought out? What is meant by "evil eye"? (Deut. 15:9; 28:54, 56; 1 Sam. 8:8, 9; Prov. 23:6; 28:22; Jer. 20:15.) CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

1. Our Lord

(1). Characteristics:

His wisdom as a teacher, 6-13, 14-23; contempt for ecclesiastical traditions, 7-13; disregard for mere outward ceremonials, 15-23; high estimation of O. T. Scriptures--called the Law of Moses "the commandment of God," "the word of God," 8, 9, 13; supreme authority--demanded that men should hearken to Him, 14.

(2). His method of judgment:

Judged men by what was in their hearts, 15-23.

(3). How He was treated:

Followed by the multitude, 14, R. V.; misunderstood by His disciples, 17; watched and criticized by scribes and Pharisees, 1, 2.

2. Pharisees and Scribes

Their regard for the tradition of the elders, 5; for external ceremonies, 3, 4; hypocrites--honored God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him, 6; left the commandment of God in order to hold fast the traditions of men, 8; rejected the commandment of God that they might keep their own traditions, 9; made the Word of God void by their own traditions, 13; their worship vain, 7; their hatred for our Lord, 1-5.

3. The Law of Moses

The Word of God, 13; the commandment of God, 8, 9; its ceremonial precepts for a temporary purpose and now done away, 15-19.

4. The Human Heart

All--important in the sight of Christ, 6, 15, 18-20; the unregenerate heart thoroughly corrupt, 21-23.

5. Worship

The worship that honors God with the lips while the heart is far from Him is hypocritical, 6; worship built upon the precepts of men is vain, 7; worship that comes from the heart is alone acceptable, 6.

Source:

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