

## DESIGNER CHRISTIANITY

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Mark 7:9-23

1. Last week we looked at the first eight verses in this chapter.
2. Jesus was confronted by a delegation of Jewish leaders who had come from Jerusalem to find things that they could use against Him.
3. They asked Him, “Why do Your disciples not walk according to the traditions of the elders, but eat their bread with (ceremonially) impure hands?”
4. Jesus responded by calling them hypocrites and applied the prophecy found in Isaiah 29:13 to them.
  - a. They honored God with their lips while their hearts were far from Him.
  - b. Their worship of God was in vain (useless).
  - c. They elevated the man-made traditions of men above the Word of God.
5. In their attempt to interpret and apply the Old Testament law to every aspect of life the Jewish leaders had compiled volumes of rules and regulations that enslaved people rather than freeing people to know and worship God in truth.
6. Jesus perfectly kept the Law, but He purposefully challenged the validity of the “traditions of the elders.”
7. We will look at this passage under three headings.
  - a. Jesus confronted the fact that their traditions circumvented the clear intent of God’s Word.
  - b. Jesus declared that the Jewish religious leaders were blind guides of the blind. Matthew 15:14
  - c. Jesus went on to explained that sin is an inward problem that manifests itself outwardly.

### **I. Jesus confronted the fact that their traditions circumvented the clear intent of God’s Word.**

A. Jesus chose as His example the conflict between the commandment of God to honor one’s father and mother and their tradition that allowed for a child to escape his responsibility to his parents.

1. The commandment was clear. Exodus 20:12

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”

NOTE: God’s intent was clear; the recipients of the Law were to honor their parents all the days of their lives.

2. That included taking care of them in their old age as Paul made clear in 1 Timothy 5:3-8.

Honor widows who are widows indeed; 4 **but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.** 5 Now she who is a widow indeed and who has been left alone, has fixed her hope on God and continues in entreaties and prayers night and day. 6 But she who gives herself to wanton pleasure is dead even while she lives. 7 Prescribe these things as well, so that they may be above reproach. 8 **But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.**

3. The traditions of the elders allowed for a person to dedicate everything they had to God and yet continue to use their resources for themselves thus releasing them from having to help others, including their parents.
- B. Jesus stated that they invalidated the Word of God by the traditions they had handed down; and that they did many other things as well.
- C. Now the question we have to ask ourselves is are we guilty of doing the same thing?
- D. Some simply redefine God by ignoring what the Bible says about Him. Psalm 50:16-21  
 But to the wicked God says, what right have you to tell of My statutes and to take My covenant in your mouth? 17 "For you hate discipline, and you cast My words behind you. 18 "When you see a thief, you are pleased with him, and you associate with adulterers. 19 "You let your mouth loose in evil and your tongue frames deceit. 20 "You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother's son. 21 "**These things you have done and I kept silence; you thought that I was just like you;** I will reprove you and state the case in order before your eyes.
1. God is not who He is, rather He is who people want Him to be.
  2. Truth is not fixed, rather it is relative.
  3. Words mean whatever people want them to mean.
- E. The tendency in our day is towards what I would call, "Designer Christianity."
1. It is a form of Christianity:
    - a. That is a product of one's own making; not conforming to true Biblical Christianity.
    - b. That is comfortable without constraints or absolutes.
    - c. That is aesthetically pleasing and appealing to carnal, lukewarm professing Christians.
  2. It allows its proponents to ignore much of what the Bible has to say. Passages like:
    - a. John 13:34-35  
 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."
    - b. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20  
**Flee immorality.** Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body. 19 Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? 20 For you have been bought with a price: therefore **glorify God in your body.**

## II. Jesus declared that the Jewish religious leaders were blind leaders of the blind. Matthew 15:12-14

Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" 13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. 14 "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

- A. The Jewish leaders were offended by Jesus' clear denunciation of them and their traditions.
- B. Those who elevate their own doctrines and traditions above the truth of God's Word are always offended by anything that does not conform to their misguided view of things.
- C. Jesus stated that because they were not of God they would be uprooted, and, because they were blind leaders of the blind, both they and their followers would end up in Hell.

### **III. Jesus went on to explain that sin is an inward problem that manifests itself outwardly.**

A. We need to stick with the context here; which has to do with eating one's food with unwashed hands; that which goes into the stomach.

NOTE: Externals that go into the mind and heart can defile us.

B. Jesus told the crowd that they were not defiled spiritually by what and how they ate.

NOTE: We do understand that we can be impacted physically by what and how we eat.

C. As Christians we are to be good stewards of our physical bodies, but we are not to make idols of them.

D. Jesus clearly stated, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man."

E. Our attitudes, desires, words and actions are products of who and what we are.

### **APPLICATION**

1. What proceeds from within is a sure indicator of the condition of our hearts.

2. Several questions come to mind related to the central theme of this message?

a. Is my view of Christianity based on the Bible or the culture in which I grew up or have identified with?

b. Am I a reliable guide for others to follow?

c. How am I cooperating with God related to becoming the person He wants me to be?

d. Are there things He wants me to deal with that I am not willing to deal with?

e. Am I more concerned with what people see then with what God knows?

3. At some point every human being will stand before God and be accepted or rejected based on their relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ.