

# Mark 7 Commentary

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John Mark

**MARK: THE SERVANT JESUS**

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## THE LIFE OF CHRIST SHOWING COVERAGE BY MARK (SHADED AREA)

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Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

### Mark 7:1 The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,

Wuest And there gather together to Him the Pharisees and certain ones of the scribes who came from Jerusalem. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET Mark 7:1 Now the Pharisees and some of the experts in the law who came from Jerusalem gathered around him.

NLT Mark 7:1 One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus.

ESV Mark 7:1 Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem,

NIV Mark 7:1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and

GNT Mark 7:1 Κα συν γονται πρ ς α τ ν ο Φαρισα οι κα τινες τ ν γραμματ ων λθ ντες π εροσολ μων.

KJV Mark 7:1 Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

- **Pharisees:** Mk 3:22 Mt 15:1 Lu 5:17 11:53,54
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:1+ Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,

Luke 11:37-52+ is not a direct parallel with Mark's account but does record a controversy that has some similarities.

### ANOTHER CONFRONTATION WITH RELIGIOUS LEADERS

Mark records two previous confrontations by the Pharisees in Mark 2:23–28+ (Accusation - His disciples "Harvesting grain" on the Sabbath) and Mark 3:1–6+ (Accusation - Healing a man's withered arm in the synagogue on the Sabbath). It is interesting that there was no confrontation when Jesus cast out a demon in the synagogue on the Sabbath (Mk 1:21-27+), but this was early in His ministry and there was no religious opposition. This segment can be divided into

- Mark 7:1-5 - Challenge by the Pharisees
- Mark 7:6-13 - Jesus' Reply

**Hiebert** divides this first section as follows - In this controversy with the Jewish leaders, Jesus struck at their perverted traditions, which raised the controversy (Mk 7:1–13), and then dealt with the problem of the nature of true defilement, which underlay the controversy (Mk 7:14–23).

**Bruce** entitles Mark 7:1-23 "Concerning ceremonial ablutions." (See [Ritual Purifications](#); [What is a mikvah?](#))

**Constable** - This confrontation played an important part in Jesus' decision to withdraw from Galilee again ( Mark 7:24; cf. Mark 2:1 to Mark 3:6). Along with mounting popularity ( Mark 6:53-56) came increasing opposition from the Jewish religious leaders. This section is essentially another block of Jesus' teaching. It revealed Jesus further and continued the preparation of the disciples for what lay ahead of them. ([Notes](#))

**SETTING** Jesus has stayed away from Jerusalem, so Pharisees and scribes come to Galilee, probably to Capernaum, to confront Him about His credentials as Messiah. Their first accusations are against His disciples. (Jensen) **Hiebert** agrees that "The mention

of the scribes coming from Jerusalem indicates that it took place in Galilee, but the exact place is uncertain. It was apparently in or near Capernaum."

The religious leaders from Jerusalem are not coming to be fed but to find fault! "This delegation from Jerusalem already made up their mind about Jesus and looked for something to confirm their opinion." ([Guzik](#)) Beware if you make up your mind about Jesus and say He was just another man and/or He was not God, etc, because you may never come to truly recognize Him as the Savior of the world!

[Guzik](#) - The concept of evaluating Jesus' ministry was fine. In outward appearance, these men protected Israel from a potential false prophet or false messiah. But the way they actually evaluated Jesus was all wrong. First, they already made up their mind about Jesus. Second, they did not evaluate Jesus against the measure of God's Word. They evaluated Him against the measure of their religious traditions.

This is Mark's second mention of an envoy of religious leaders from Jerusalem which had pronounced a harsh condemnation against Jesus. Mark 3:22+ says "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."

**The Pharisees ([pharisaioi](#)) and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem- Gathered together ([sunago](#))** in the [present tense](#) (continually being gathered together) which is known as the **historical present** (see below). Jesus' activities on previous occasions had attracted the attention of these men (Mark 2:6, 16, 24; 3:6, 22); and they will again (Mark 8:11; 10:2; 12:13)

Verbs in [present tense](#) in the context of the so-called [historical present](#) call for a vivid imagination on the part of the reader. The **historical present** describes a past event as though it were actually taking place. Here the present is a pictorial tense, displaying the action vividly before our eyes. In English we often use the historical present when recounting personal experiences such as "then he says to me" even though what he said occurred in the past. The Gospel of Mark frequently uses historical present - see [peculiarities of Mark](#). Mark wants us to picture these Pharisees surrounding Jesus like a "brood of vipers" with serpentine precision surrounding Jesus, as if preparing their "victim" for a kill!

**Hiebert** - Their coming meant the arrival in Galilee of another "fact-finding commission" for the Jerusalem authorities (cf. Mark 3:22)....They (SCRIBES) were the official interpreters of the Mosaic law and the guardians of its sanctity. Their interpretations formed the basis for the practices of the Pharisees. These scribes had apparently been selected for their known skill in dealing with violations of the law, of which Jesus was suspected.

**Akin** on modern day **Pharisees** - Amazingly we can have a passion for God and yet not know God. We can be deceived, captured and enslaved by the deadly lure of legalism. Tragically, those who have been raised in the church all their lives are the most susceptible to this deception. Our pride in our religious rituals, church practices and cultural traditions blind us to 1) our great sinfulness and 2) the great Savior who alone can rescue us from our sin. ([Sermon](#))

**Brian Bill** - The Pharisees and scribes are the religious experts of the day and they "gather" together to team up against Jesus. We emphasize the importance of gathering with God's people for worship but there are other ways people gather that are not so good. These men made a two-day trip from Jerusalem, the center of spirituality. One commentator refers to them as, "legalistic, self-righteous, hypocritical phony members of the religious establishment." (Sermon)

**E. Stanley Jones** writes on **they had come from Jerusalem** - They came all the way from Jerusalem to meet Him, and their life attitudes were so negative and faultfinding that all they saw was unwashed hands. They couldn't see the greatest movement of redemption that had ever touched our planet—a movement that was cleansing the minds and souls and bodies of men.... Their big eyes were opened wide to the little and marginal, and blind to the big. So history forgets them, the negative—forgets them except as a background for this impact of the positive Christ. They left a criticism; He left a conversion. They picked flaws, He picked followers. (Growing Spiritually)

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**Pharisees** ([5330](#)) ([pharisaioi](#)) is transliterated from the Hebrew **parash** ([06567](#) - to separate) from Aramaic word **peras** ([06537](#)) ("Peres" in Da 5:28+), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. After the resettling of the Jewish people in Judea on their return from the Babylonian captivity, there were two religious groups among them. One party contented themselves with following only what was written in the Law of Moses and were known as **Zadikim**, the righteous. The other group called **Chasidim** or the pious added traditions of Jewish rabbis to the Law and voluntarily complied with them. [Sadducees](#) originated from the Zadikim. Pharisees and the [Essenes](#) originated from the Chasidim. The Pharisees were the separatists of their day, and considered themselves much holier than the common people (Lu 18:11, 12). even wearing special garments to distinguish themselves. Although Pharisees were in number (about 6,000 according to [Josephus](#).

[Ant. 17.2.4](#)), their theology and tradition had great influence with the common people (who, ironically, the Pharisees often viewed with proud, self-righteous contempt [cf. John 7:49]) In opposition to those of the Sadducees, The Pharisees were "supernaturalists" and believed in the existence of angels and spirits and the resurrection (Lk 20:27+; Acts 23:6–9+), which the Sadducees denied (Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18; Lu 20:27).

The Pharisees distinguished themselves by their zeal for the **traditions of men**, which held to be equal to the Word of God. With the completion of the **Mishnah** (written compilation of the oral law, rituals, and traditions) in about A.D. 200, and the **Talmud** (the combination of the **Mishnah** and the **Gemara** [three centuries of the rabbis' commentary on the **Mishnah**]) in about A.D. 425 to A.D. 500, the Pharisees' teaching became virtually synonymous with Judaism. Ironically, it was their zeal for the law that caused the Pharisees to become focused on rituals and externally keeping the law. They abandoned true religion of the heart for mere outward behavior modification and ritual (Mt. 15:3–6), leading Jesus to scathingly denounce their pseudospirituality: The complex set of man-made rules and regulations was a crushing, unbearable burden (Mt. 23:4; Acts 15:10). ([See more detailed notes from William Barclay](#))

**Scribes** (1122)(**grammateus** from **grapho** = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology and most sources consider the **lawyers** (nomikos = one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be scribes. They were recognized experts in the law of Moses and in the traditions propounded in the rabbinic writings. Not all **Pharisees** were scribes, but the scribes were primarily **Pharisees**, who were interpreters and teachers of the law of Moses and the traditional rabbinic writings. Their teaching provided the theological framework for the Pharisees' legalistic system of works-righteousness. The **scribes** were the dominant force in Judaism, not only theologically, but socially because their views affected every aspect of Jewish life, social and legal. They were revered, and given the respectful title of Rabbi (Mt. 23:7). Uses in Matthew's Gospel - Mk. 1:22; Mk. 2:6; Mk. 2:16; Mk. 3:22; Mk. 7:1; Mk. 7:5; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 9:11; Mk. 9:14; Mk. 10:33; Mk. 11:18; Mk. 11:27; Mk. 12:28; Mk. 12:32; Mk. 12:35; Mk. 12:38; Mk. 14:1; Mk. 14:43; Mk. 14:53; Mk. 15:1; Mk. 15:31; Pharisees and Scribes in Mark - Mk 2:16, Mk 7:1, 5

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#### **Brian Bell - Here are a few observations before we dive in to Mark 7:1-14.**

1. Much of Mark's material focuses on what Jesus did; chapter 7 is filled with what He said. To say it another way, much of this gospel records the miracles of Jesus. In these verses we get to hear His message.
2. From this point forward in Mark's gospel we see the popularity of Jesus begin to decline. Moving toward the final year of His life, Jesus pours more time into the disciples while the religious leaders ramp up their confrontation. As Jesus exposes their superficial spirituality, they become more agitated and attack Him relentlessly to discredit Him and eventually send Him to death.
3. The word "**tradition**" is used six different times in this passage (Mark 7:3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 13). While tradition can be a good thing, Jesus is going to show us that tradition must be subservient to Scripture, not the other way around.
4. Mark 7:7 is the key verse that will help us unpack this section: "In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." The word "vain" means groundless, invalid, and hypocritical. We don't want our worship to be worthless, do we?

With that as background, here's a simple outline that captures the flow of thought:

1. Confrontation (Mark 7:1-5)
2. Condemnation (Mark 7:6-9)
3. Correction (Mark 7:10-13)

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**J C Ryle - THIS passage contains a humbling picture of what human nature is capable of doing in religion.** It is one of those Scriptures which ought to be frequently and diligently studied by all who desire the prosperity of the Church of Christ.

The first thing, which demands our attention in these verses, is the low and degraded condition of Jewish religion, when our Lord was upon earth. What can be more deplorable than the statement now before us? We find the principal teachers of the Jewish nation finding fault, "because our Lord's disciples ate bread with unwashed hands!" We are told that they attached great importance to the "washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables!" In short, the man who paid most rigid attention to mere external observances of human invention was reckoned the holiest man!

The nation, be it remembered, in which this state of things existed, was the most highly favoured in the world. To it was given the law on Mount Sinai, the service of God, the priest-hood, the covenants, and the promises. Moses, and Samuel, and David, and the prophets, lived and died among its people. No nation upon earth ever had so many spiritual privileges. No nation ever misused its privileges so fearfully, and so thoroughly forsook its own mercies. Never did fine gold become so dim! From the religion of the books

of Deuteronomy and Psalms, to the religion of washing hands, and pots, and cups, how great was the fall! No wonder that in the time of our Lord's earthly ministry, He found the people like sheep without a shepherd. External observances alone feed no consciences and sanctify no hearts.

Let the history of the Jewish church be a warning to us never to trifle with false doctrine. If we once tolerate it we never know how far it may go, or into what degraded state of religion we may at last fall. Once leave the King's highway of truth, and we may end with washing pots and cups, like Pharisees and Scribes. There is nothing too mean, trifling, or irrational for a man, if he once turns his back on God's word. There are branches of the Church of Christ at this day in which the Scriptures are never read, and the Gospel never preached,—branches in which the only religion now remaining consists in using a few unmeaning forms and keeping certain man-made fasts and feasts,—branches which began well, like the Jewish church, and like the Jewish church, have now fallen into utter barrenness and decay. We can never be too jealous about false doctrine. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump. Let us earnestly contend for the whole faith once delivered to the saints.\*

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#### **Vance Havner - "Keep Thy Heart"      Matthew 15:1-20 Mark 7:1-23**

ONE is amazed at the Pharisees and scribes who could look over all the mighty works and teachings of our Lord and fasten upon such a petty matter as the fact that His disciples did not wash their hands according to traditional regulations (Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23). Yet we still have with us those who value set customs above the inner realities, to whom sacrifice is more important than mercy. Our Lord described both classes with His quotation from Isaiah 29:13: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."

Jesus recognized a clean heart above clean hands. He reproved them for their "corban" custom by which they dedicated gifts to God and therefore escaped giving them to the needy. It was well to vow gifts to God, but it had degenerated into a clever excuse for not helping the ones in need—a pretext for evading responsibility.

It is not what goeth into a man but what proceeds from him—his thoughts and acts, which reveal his heart, these defile him. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Therefore, "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Such teaching offended the Pharisees, but Jesus said, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." It reminds us of the Old Testament statement: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos. 4:17). Our Lord made no effort to rescue these Pharisees; He regarded them as hopelessly set against Him. They had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Well does formal and religious America need to ponder our Lord's position as to outward ritual and inward reality. Throughout the Word, God cries against it: through Isaiah (1:11-17), Hosea (6:6), Amos (5:21-24). Jesus followed the prophets with their own words, hurling them against an entrenched religiousness that could become excited over a slight disregard for precedent but could not see the truth of the Son of God.

Today, sticklers for the niceties of tradition still strain out the gnat and swallow the camel, are careful to observe seasons and ordinances and minute church restrictions; but their heart is far from God. Jesus, however, would break a precedent and smash a tradition anytime to get at a needy life. Sabbath regulations were less important than a withered hand.

There are even Christians who have bordered on medieval asceticism by denying themselves wholesome and normal enjoyment and regulating each detail with meticulous care until they have fallen into the error of the Colossians, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." One is not more holy by being less human. It is the state of the heart that matters most, for evil comes from within. It does no good to cleanse the hands with water if the heart has not been cleansed by the blood.

**Mark 7:2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.**

Wuest And, having seen certain ones of His disciples, that with unhallowed hands, that is, unwashed hands, they were eating the loaves.

NET Mark 7:2 And they saw that some of Jesus' disciples ate their bread with unclean hands, that is, unwashed.

NLT Mark 7:2 They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating.

ESV Mark 7:2 they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

NIV Mark 7:2 saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is, unwashed.

GNT Mark 7:2 καὶ ὁ ντεξ τιν ζ τ ν μαθητ ν α το τι κοινὰς χερσ ν, το τ στικ ν πτοις, σθ ουσιν το ς ρτους

KJV Mark 7:2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, *they found fault*.

- **impure**, Ac 10:14, Acts 15:28
- *they found fault* (Only in Textus Receptus): Da 6:4,5 Mt 7:3-5 Mt 23:23-25
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Acts 10:14+ But Peter said, "By no means, Lord, for I have never eaten anything unholy and unclean."

Acts 15:28-29+ "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell."

### CRITICIZING LACK OF CEREMONIAL CLEANSING

**And had seen that some of His disciples ([mathetes](#)) were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed** - Notice Mark gives Gentile readers the definition of **impure hands** as hands that are **unwashed**. Note Mark does not say "dirty" hands (so this has nothing to do with personal hygiene but only with "pseudo holiness!") but **impure** (see [koinos](#) below) hands, which speaks of ceremonial or ritual impurity as defined by the traditions of men, not by God's Law. Unwashed is [aniptos](#) (only here and Mt 15:20) and means not washed according to Jewish traditions for washing hands. Note that "had seen" is interrupted by an explanation in vv3-4 and picks back up in Mk 7:5 with "The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him...." "The scribes and Pharisees were not objecting because the disciples were eating with dirty hands but because they had not gone through the accepted purification rituals before eating with their hands. Most Jews regarded breaking these traditions as sin." (Constable) The Jewish writer [Edersheim](#) adds "Indeed, a Rabbi who had held this command in contempt was actually buried in excommunication."

It is possible that the food that the disciples ate was the food left over from the feeding of the five thousand (Mark 6:43).

According to **Josephus**, "The Pharisees have imposed on the people many laws from the tradition of the fathers not written in the Law of Moses" ([Ant. 13.10.6 §297](#)).

What did a Pharisee of Pharisees say after meeting the Messiah on the Damascus Road? **'I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is unclean in itself;** but to him who thinks anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean." (Romans 14:14)

**Constable** points out that "In Mark's narrative, the words **"unclean"** (Mark 7:2; Mark 7:5; Mark 7:15; Mark 7:18; Mark 7:20; Mark 7:23) and **"tradition"** ( Mark 7:3; Mark 7:5; Mark 7:8-9; Mark 7:13) are key. ([Notes](#))

**Akin on some of Your disciples** - if we cannot find a fault that will stick to them, then we will go after their friends, associates and followers. "Guilt by association" is always a good tactic in taking someone down. This is the strategy they pursue (Mk 7:2, 5) Religious legalists and Pharisees are expert at this game. Too often we play the game as well ([Sermon](#))

**Hiebert** - The scribal charge was that the disciples were eating with hands that were ceremonially "common," had not been separated from the defilement resulting from contact with profane things. They held that such unclean hands must be purified by an act of ceremonial washing to remove the defilement. The charge was not that the disciples were eating with grimy hands but that they had not cleansed their hands with the proper rite of purification.

**Impure** (unclean, unholy) ([2839](#)) ([koinos](#)) is an adjective which means primarily **common**, as belonging equally to several, being of mutual interest or shared collectively, that which is **common** to everybody. (Acts 2:44; Acts 4:32; Titus 1:4 = "common faith"; Jude 1:3 = "common salvation") More generally, and usually in a negative sense, **koinos** means **defiled** (corrupted in regard to its purity or perfection), **unclean** (because it is treated as common and thus considered morally or spiritually impure) or **profane** (not holy because unconsecrated, impure, or defiled). It is surprising that this is the only use of **koinos** in the Gospels!

**Guzik** - The hand washing described here was purely ceremonial. It wasn't enough to properly clean your hands if they were very dirty. You would have to first wash your hands to make them clean, and then perform the ritual to make them spiritually clean. They even had an accompanying prayer to be said during the ritual washing: "Blessed be Thou, O Lord, King of the universe, who

sanctified us by the laws and commanded us to wash the hands.” (Cited in Lane). “The biblical mandate that the priests had to wash their hands and feet prior to entering the Tabernacle (Exodus 30:19; 40:12) provided the foundation for the wide-spread practice of ritual washings in Palestinian and diaspora Judaism.” (Lane)

#### Related Resources:

- [When does hygiene cross the line and become vanity? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How should a Christian view tradition? | GotQuestions.org](#)

**Mark 7:3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders;**

Wuest - For the Pharisees and all the Jews, unless they wash their own hands meticulously, do not eat, habitually keeping, carefully and faithfully, that which is delivered from the elders to be observed.

NET Mark 7:3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they perform a ritual washing, holding fast to the tradition of the elders.

NLT Mark 7:3 (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions.

ESV Mark 7:3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders,

NIV Mark 7:3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders.

GNT Mark 7:3 -ο γρ Φαρισαοι κα πντες ο ουδαοι ν μ πυγμ ν ψωνται τς χερας οκ σθουσιν, κρατο ντες τ ν παρ δοσιν τ ν πρεσβυτ ρων,

KJV Mark 7:3 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

- **tradition:** Mk 7:7-10,13 Mt 15:2-6 Ga 1:14 Col 2:8,21-23 1Pe 1:18
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### A PARENTHETICAL EXPLANATION

This parenthesis extends from Mark 7:3-4 and is not found in Matthew's account. Since Mark is writing mainly to Gentile readers, this parenthesis serves to explain to Gentile readers the Jewish ritual of ceremonial washing.

**For** - Term of explanation. Mark explains the Jewish tradition of washing hands in Mark 7:2.

**Guzik** - For these ceremonial washings, special stone vessels of water were kept because ordinary water might be unclean.

**the Pharisees (phariseaios) and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders** - Don't interpret this to mean the disciples would not wash dirty hands before they ate. The accusation does not deal with lack of good sanitary practice but with failure to wash ritually. The point is the disciples did not wash using the rituals prescribed by the traditions of men. One commentator says that unless, for instance, they washed up to the elbows, they were considered ceremonially defiled! (see [Modern Jewish ritual washing on youtube](#)). Note the phrase all the Jews indicating this was commonly observed by all the Jews. The Scribes and Pharisee were good at putting heavy burdens on others (cf Mt 23:15) Jesus had declared "Woe to you lawyers (probably also members of the scribes) as well! For you weigh men down with burdens hard to bear, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers.(Lk 11:46+). The point is that if you wanted to be known as "righteous" you would submit to the same practices as the scribes and Pharisees. **Observing** is the verb [krateo](#) which literally means to grasp and hold fast and here figuratively describing the Pharisees as ([present tense](#) = continually) holding fast to this **traditions of the elders**, those teachings that have been literally "handed down." They are obstinately adhering to "the tradition of the elders." Wuest adds **krateo** here conveys the sense of "to keep carefully and faithfully."

**Young's Literal** on **carefully wash their hands** has = "if they do not wash the hands to the wrist."



**Wuest on carefully wash their hands** - The middle voice of the verb shows that they do the washing themselves. The washing is not left to an attendant. The word "oft" is pugmē (πυγμή). It is in the instrumental case. The washing is done with the clenched fist. The individual rubs one hand and the arm up to the elbow with the other hand clenched. He rubs the palm of one hand with the other closed, so as to make sure that the part that touched the food would be clean.

An oracle says: "at dawn they lift up holy arms toward heaven, from their beds [i.e., as they get up], always sanctifying their flesh [some manuscripts read "hands"] with water, and they honor only the Immortal who always rules, and then their parents" (Sibylline Oracles 3:591–594).

**A B Bruce on pugme** - Most recent interpreters interpret pugme as meaning that they rubbed hard the palm of one hand with the other closed, so as to make sure that the part which touched food should be clean.

**Hiebert on carefully...** - The ASV "diligently" is a figurative rendering, in accord with the Hebrew idiom of the fist as denoting strength or vigor. But Mark's non-Jewish readers probably were not familiar with this expression. It seems best to take "with the fist" literally, but the exact procedure is not clear. It has been taken to mean a washing (1) in which one clenched fist was turned about in the hollow of the other hand; (2) up to the elbow, or to the wrists; (3) with a handful of water; or (4) by rubbing the hand with the dry fist.

**Lightfoot** has an interesting note - "To these most rigid canons they added also bugbears and ghosts to affright them.*It was the business of Shibta.* Where the Gloss is, "*Shibta* was one of the demons who hurt them that wash not their hands before meat." The Aruch writes thus, "*Shibta* is an evil spirit which sits upon men's hands in the night: and if any touch his food with unwashen hands, that spirit sits upon that food, and there is danger from it.""

**Wiersbe** - Rabbi Eleazer said, 'He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition has no share in the world to come' ... The Mishna, a collection of Jewish traditions in the Talmud, records, 'It is a greater offense to teach anything contrary to the voice of the Rabbis than to contradict Scripture itself.' "

**John Trapp** - "The Jews have several ordinary sayings, that show in what esteem they had these traditions, as If the scribes say our right hand is our left, and our left hand is our right, we are to believe them. And, There is more in the words of the scribes than the words of the law ... The Jewish Rabbi Jose saith, He sinneth as much as who eateth with unwashen hands, as he that lieth with an harlot."

**G C Morgan on traditions** - There had grown up a great body of traditions; traditions which in the first place were intended to be interpretations of the law, and applications of the law to local circumstances; traditions which in the second place became interpretations of traditions, and applications of traditions; and the traditions in the third place, which were interpretations of interpretations of interpretations of traditions!"

**Wuest on elders.** The word is presbuteros (πρεσβυτερος) "elder," used of age, but here, of rank or position. Among the Jews it referred to members of the great council or Sanhedrin. In early times the rulers of the people were selected from the elderly men. The traditions of the elders consisted of oral law originated by the Jewish religious leaders. They did not come from the Word of God. Our Lord (Matthew 15:6) asserts that they nullify the Word and thus are directly antagonistic to it. The rabbis held that disobedience to it was mortal sin. Thus, a real issue is raised here between the Pharisees and Jesus. It was man-made ceremonial laws in conflict with the Word of God.

**Carefully** (ONLY NT USE)(4435)(**pugme** from **pux** = the fist doubled and used as a weapon) means the fist and in this only NT use apparently describes rubbing them with the fist, carefully and diligently. Twice in the Septuagint - Ex. 21:18; Isa. 58:4. **Cleon Rogers** adds "The dative could be modal ("with. the fist"), with the fist held out while water is poured over it. It could be instrumental dative, where the fist is rubbed in the hand to wash it; or it could be dative of measure: "by elbow length""

**TSK note** - Gr. With the fist, Up to the elbow, Theophylact. [Pugme <Strong's G4435>.] the fist; Dr. Lightfoot illustrates by a tradition from the Talmudical tracts, that when they washed their hands, they washed the fist up to the joint of the arm, [ad perek.] The Jews laid great stress on these washings, or baptisms, [baptismos] considering eating with unwashen hands no ordinary crime, and feigning that an evil spirit, called Shibta, has a right to sit on the food of him who thus eats, and render it hurtful.

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**Traditions** (3862)(**paradosis** from **paradidomi** = deliver in teaching) means literally to give from the presence of, thus to give personally. It signifies an act of transmission or that which is transmitted and thus refers to that which is handed down or transmitted from generation to generation or from one to another. In this context **paradosis** was used to refer to the traditions of men which had been engrafted on the Mosaic Law. All 8 uses (of a total of 13 in NT) in the Gospels are in the parallel descriptions in Matthew 15



and Mark 7 (Matt. 15:2; Matt. 15:3; Matt. 15:6; Mk. 7:3; Mk. 7:5; Mk. 7:8; Mk. 7:9; Mk. 7:13) MacArthur writes that "Ancestral **traditions** refers to the body of oral teachings about the Old Testament law that came to have equal authority with the Law. Commonly known as the [Halakah](#), this collection of [Torah](#) interpretations became a fence around God's revealed law and all but hid it from view. Over a period of several hundred years it had expanded into a mammoth accumulation of religious, moral, legal, practical, and ceremonial regulations that defied comprehension, much less total compliance. It contained such vast amounts of minutiae that even the most learned rabbinical scholars could not master it either by interpretation or in behavior. Yet the more complex and burdensome it became, the more zealously Jewish legalists revered and propagated it." ([Galatians](#))

**Elders** (3811)([presbuteros](#) the comparative form of **présbus** = an old man or an ambassador) referred to men who were older or more senior with no negative connotations but rather a sense of venerability. **Presbuteros** is transliterated into English as "presbyter" (a leader in one of the Jewish communities--especially a member of the [Sanhedrin](#)--or of the early Christian churches) and from which the word "priest" (from Late Latin presbyter) was derived. "**Elders** denotes not the elders of the synagogue or the members of the Sanhedrin as the upholders of this teaching, but rather the noted Jewish teachers of the law of the past whose judgments were regarded as binding and their interpretations diligently passed on to others by the scribes." (Hiebert)

**Mark 7:4 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.)**

Wuest And, from the marketplace, if they do not wash themselves, they do not eat. And other things of the same order, many of them there are which they received for the purpose of keeping, washing of cups and pint measures and copper vessels.

NET Mark 7:4 And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. They hold fast to many other traditions: the washing of cups, pots, kettles, and dining couches.)

NLT Mark 7:4 Similarly, they don't eat anything from the market until they immerse their hands in water. This is but one of many traditions they have clung to-- such as their ceremonial washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles.)

ESV Mark 7:4 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.)

NIV Mark 7:4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

GNT Mark 7:4 κα π γορ ς ν μ βαπτ σωνται ο κ σθ ουσιν, κα λλα πολλ στιν παρ λαβον κρατε ν, βαπτισμο ς ποτηρ ων κα ξεστ ν κα χαλκ ων [κα κλιν ν]-

KJV Mark 7:4 And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels, and of tables.

- **except:** Job 9:30,31 Ps 26:6 Isa 1:16 Jer 4:14 Mt 27:24 Lu 11:38,39 Joh 2:6 3:25 Heb 9:10 Jas 4:8 1Jn 1:7
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves-** The market place ([agora](#)) was like our modern day city squares (still found in smaller towns) and was the central place for trading and business, and public life in general. The point is that the Jews, mingling with men in public, would be considered ceremonially defiled, calling for the need to cleanse themselves. The verb **cleanse** is [rhantizo](#) and was described sprinkling and was used in the OT.

While not all agree, **Hiebert** thinks **cleanse themselves** means "Before any eating, the Pharisees always washed their hands; when returning from the marketplace, they always took a bath. Others, less probably, think that only the immersion of the hands is meant. Having been jostled in the marketplace, the scrupulous Pharisees would feel the need to purify their entire person. The Levitical law required such bathing only of ministering priests (Lev. 16:4, 24, 26; 22:6) and of others on specific occasions (Lev. 14:8-9; 15:5-27)."

**Wuest** has a technical note on **cleanse themselves** - There is a controversy among textual critics as to whether the original manuscript had rantizō (αντιζω) "to sprinkle," or baptizō (βαπτίζω) "to immerse." We cannot hope to settle this question. Suffice it to say that the word "**unwashed**" of verse 2 and "**wash**" of verse 3, are the translation of **nip̄tō** "to wash," and that the "washing" of these verses refers to the same act as the "washing" of verse 4. The washing was not for purposes of personal, physical

cleanliness, but merely for ceremonial reasons. We will translate therefore by the word "wash."

**And there are many other things which they have received in order to observe-** As noted above the Mishnah had over 30 pages of instruction on ritual washing! With all these traditions, religion became like a heavy burden and not a delight. One can understand Jesus' words in Luke 11:46+

"Woe to you lawyers as well! For you **weigh men down with burdens hard to bear**, while you yourselves will not even touch the burdens with one of your fingers."

What a stark contrast these traditions of men were when compared with the wonderful invitation from the Messiah to **'Come** to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 **'Take** My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and YOU WILL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30 "For **My yoke is easy and My burden is light.**" (Mt 11:28-30+)

**Such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots - Washing** is [baptismos](#) (only other uses - Heb 6:2, Heb 9:10) which in this case speaks of ritual washing. Ritual cleansing of utensils borders on ridiculous for inanimate objects cannot even have a relationship with God. But then these rituals were not really about relationship with God but about self-righteousness and pride of men!

**Chuck Smith** quips "you don't know what may have touched the pots. Some little fly may have landed on the pot that had landed on a Gentile's shoulder! However, if when the pot was open, a fly would happen to land on the inside, that was it. You had to break the thing in pieces and not leave a piece large enough to take oil to anoint your little toe. In other words, it had to really be shattered, because it was unclean. And all of these rules were codified in the [Mishnah](#).... It is interesting how easily the traditions of man can become the dogmas and the doctrines of the church. Things that are just traditions. I think that traditions are probably the hardest thing a person has to deal with as far as being free. We are bound by traditions. Traditions have a greater hold on a person than almost anything else. These traditions are deeply ingrained in us. But if you really go back to study the background of the traditions, you'll find that many times they have no biblical base at all. But oftentimes, traditions are based in paganism. And yet, because they have been practiced so long in church, they become the dogma of the church, and finally the doctrines of the church.... The doctrine of [infant baptism for salvation](#): you will not find one scriptural base for that doctrine. It's the traditions of men. And yet, it is held too tightly by many, many churches as solid church doctrine. But, it's doctrine based upon tradition, not the foundation of the word." ([Commentary](#))

**Hiebert** - "Washing of cups, and pots, brasen vessels"—to assure their ceremonial cleanness. Cups were the ordinary drinking vessels. Pots were larger jugs or pitchers from which the cups were filled. They were household vessels in which water for drinking or purifying was kept. Such vessels might be made either of wood or earthenware. Brazen vessels were larger vessels of brass or copper used for cooking. The Mishnah devotes thirty chapters to the matter of the purification of vessels.

**A B Bruce** - the evangelist explains how the Jews not only cleansed their own persons, but also all sorts of household utensils—altogether a serious business, that of preserving ceremonial purity. The two first articles, cups and jugs, would be of wood; earthen vessels when defiled had to be broken (Leviticus 15:12). (EGT)

[Akin](#) sums it up...-

- You might have touched something unclean so you must wash.
- You might have touched a Gentile person so you must wash.
- Cups must be washed; pots must be washed, and so on (v. 4).
- Disregard the "traditions of the elders" (v. 3), and your sin

**Mark 7:5 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?"**

NET Mark 7:5 The Pharisees and the experts in the law asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with unwashed hands?"

NLT Mark 7:5 So the Pharisees and teachers of religious law asked him, "Why don't your disciples follow our age-old tradition? They eat without first performing the hand-washing ceremony."

ESV Mark 7:5 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?"

NIV Mark 7:5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"

GNT Mark 7:5 καὶ περωτ σιν α τ ν ο Φαρισα οι κα ο γραμματε ς, Δι τ ο περιπατο σιν ο μαθητα σου κατ τ ν παρ δοσιν τ ν πρεσβυτ ρων, λλ κοινα ς χερσ ν σθ ουσιν τ ν ρτον;

KJV Mark 7:5 Then the Pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

- Mk 2:16-18 Mt 15:2 Ac 21:21,24 Ro 4:12 2Th 3:6,11
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:2+ "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."

### NOT WALKING IN MEN'S TRADITIONS

Why would we walk in men's traditions? One reason is that our fallen flesh has a strong desire to be men pleasers. We like to be liked. But oh how much better to LOVED by the Living God!

So now Mark picks up where he left off at verse 2 (Mk 7:2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.) "At last we come to the point, the complaint of the jealous guardians of Jewish custom, as handed down from the elders." (Bruce)

**Akin** - Religious ritual and legalistic traditions had taken over their lives enslaving them rather than freeing them. However, they were blind to their own self-imposed bondage and challenge Jesus with an air of spiritual superiority and self-righteousness. Note: even they cannot cite a scriptural justification for their practice. That, however, does not matter. We are in the "religious right!" You and your disciples are not. Now, do keep this in mind. All this religious washing had a good intent: to remind Jews that they were unclean before God. That was a good thing. However, they were completely off base on the true source of their impurity. Their problem was not outside but inside. It wasn't their hands but their hearts. It is pretty hard to compare hearts, something only God can see. So let's draw up a religious list of external activities and see who comes out on top. That is much easier. Interestingly Exodus 30:19+ informs us that the priest had to wash their hands and feet before they entered the tabernacle. The Pharisees, even out did the priest! No comparison: we are the religious champions!

**The Pharisees ([pharisaioi](#)) and the scribes ([grammateus](#)) asked Him** - Here we see the Legalists lecturing the Lord. This is the vivid [historical present](#) - "*And they keep on asking Him.*" They were not asking to get **information** but for the purpose of [incrimination](#) of Jesus! Notice that while they had observed the problem of not washing hands with Jesus' disciples, here they direct their question to Jesus in their frontal assault. In short, since He is their leader, they hold Him responsible for this reprehensible behavior!

Diligently Studying the [Talmud](#)

**Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition([paradosis](#)) of the elders** - **Not** (ou) signifies Jesus' disciples absolutely do not walk this way. **Walk** ([peripateo](#) in [present tense](#) - continually) means literally to walk about, and is used in the Hebraic sense of living or conducting one's life (cf Ge 5:24, Ps 1:1+). **According to** simply points to the standard by which their conduct was measured, that standard being **the tradition of the elders**, not the Word of God. Note that the **tradition of the elders** was eventually put into the [Mishnah](#), which was a collection of oral traditions. It is almost unbelievable to note that the [Mishnah](#) has over 35 pages devoted to washing! These regulations were then put in the [Gemara](#), which was a commentary on the Mishnah. The Mishnah and the Gemara were combined to form the [Talmud](#). See more on **Tradition of the Elders** in Matthew 15 Commentary.

**Evans** - As the elders taught their students: "Be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Law" (m. 'Abot 1:1). And according to the great teacher Shammai, an older contemporary of Jesus, who was asked: " 'Master, how many laws in the Torah have you?' 'Two,' Shammai replied, 'one written and one oral' " ('Abot deRabbi Nathan 15.3). Earlier some Pharisees had objected to Jesus' free association with "sinners and tax collectors" (Mark 2:16). This time they ask Jesus why his disciples eat with impure hands (v. 5). Both of these concerns have to do with the Pharisees' understanding of **purity**. (EXTERNAL PURITY!) (BKBC-Mt-Lk)

**But** - Term of contrast. The contrast is between the "standard" used by the disciples and the standard called for by the tradition of the elders.

**Eat their bread with impure** (unclean, unholy [koinos](#)) **hands** - Again this is not speaking of good hygienic practice, but of failure to perform ritualistic hand washing as prescribed by the elders (**the tradition of the elder**).

[Spurgeon](#) - What exaltation of trifles and forgetfulness of serious realities! Men are diseased to the heart with sin and ready to die and pass before the judgment seat to receive the condemnation which must lie upon those who continue in sin, and meanwhile, the teachers of the people are either busy with vain ceremonies or dreaming over equally vain philosophies,

**THOUGHT** - - Do you have any "HAND WASHING RITUALS" (so to speak) that you are practicing thinking they will make you more acceptable to God? It could even be good things done with a wrong motive, things like a quiet time (If I don't have my quiet time this morning, God won't bless me today!) – doing those things thinking they will make you more acceptable to God, more righteous or more holy. It is an easy legalistic trap to fall into. Paul tells us why we are accepted in the old King James of Ep 1:6KJV<sup>+</sup> writing that God has **"made us accepted in the beloved,"** in His Beloved Son, Jesus Christ. God grant us to rest in this truth and not in rituals of any sort. (Related resource - Accepted in the Beloved)

DON'T LET SOMEONE PUT YOU UNDER THE LAW,  
EVEN THE CEREMONIAL LAW.

This is **ritualism**, just a variant form of **legalism**. (Jesus fulfilled the Law, both it's moral demands and it's ceremonial demands - Ro 8:3, 4<sup>+</sup>). **Legalism is bondage!** Now that you are free in Christ, why would you want to be enslaved again? (cp Gal 4:9+) Peter called such bondage a "yoke upon the neck" (Acts 15:10+, cf. Mt 23:4, Gal 5:1+, Gal 2:4+, Heb 9:8-11+). If keeping the Law could not make us spiritual **before** we received Christ as our fully sufficient Savior (**fully and forever sufficient** to save us the first time at regeneration, our new birth, and then by His Spirit in our daily sanctification), why do we think that keeping the law can make us spiritual after we are believers? Or as Paul rhetorically phrased it..."Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected (see [epiteleo](#)) by the flesh ([flesh](#))? (Gal 3:3+) (See [Chart contrasting in the flesh vs in the Spirit](#)) Sadly many genuine believers in America are living under some form of a yoke of bondage, thinking if I just do this or do that, I'll be more acceptable to God. They may not say this overtly but their actions betray them. **S Lewis Johnson** introduces his article on the "[Paralysis of Legalism](#)" with these comments..."One of the most serious problems facing the orthodox Christian church today is the problem of **legalism**. One of the most serious problems facing the church in Paul's day was the problem of **legalism**. In every day it is the same. **Legalism** wrenches the joy of the Lord from the Christian believer, and with the joy of the Lord goes His power for vital worship and vibrant service." (**Related Resources:** Ray Stedman's excellent articles [Legalism](#) and [The Things that Can Ruin Your Faith](#))

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[Guzik](#) - To wash your hands in a special way, you started by taking at least enough of this water to fill one and one-half egg shells. Then you poured the water over your hands, starting at the fingers and running down towards your wrist. Then you cleansed each palm by rubbing the fist of the other hand into it. Then you poured water over your hands again, this time from the wrist towards the fingers.

i. A really strict Jew would do this not only before the meal, but also between each course. And the rabbis were deadly serious about this. They said that bread eaten with unwashed hands was no better than excrement. One rabbi who once failed to perform the ritual washing was excommunicated. Another rabbi was imprisoned by the Romans, and he used his ration of water for ceremonial cleansing instead of drinking, nearly dying of thirst. He was regarded as a great hero for this sacrifice.

ii. It's easy for us to think these religious leaders, or this whole religious culture was really stupid and phony for their emphasis on traditions like this. But we don't realize how subtly these things emerge and how spiritual they seem to be, especially in the beginning. Many rituals or traditions seem to be built on unshakable spiritual logic:

- Doesn't God want us to honor Him in everything we do?
- Didn't God command the priests to wash their hands before serving Him?
- Shouldn't every faithful follower of God have the same devotion as a priest?
- Isn't every meal sacred to God?
- Shouldn't we take every opportunity to make ourselves pure before the Lord?
- Doesn't God say, Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3–4).

iii. When the questions are put this way, it's easy to say, "Yes, yes, yes," until you have agreed with the logic supporting the tradition. But if in the end you have a word of man, a tradition of man, a ritual of man, that has the same weight as the Word of God, you're wrong. Your "spiritual logic" doesn't matter. You are then wrong.

**Mark 7:6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.'**

Wuest - And He said to them; Excellently did Isaiah prophecy concerning you, the hypocrites, as it stands written; This people is constantly honoring Me with their lips. But their heart holds at a great distance from Me.

NET Mark 7:6 He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied correctly about you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

NLT Mark 7:6 Jesus replied, "You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

ESV Mark 7:6 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;

NIV Mark 7:6 He replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: " 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

GNT Mark 7:6 ὁ ἐπὶ αὐτοῖς, Καλὰς προφητείας περὶ μὲν τῶν ποκρίτων, ὅς γε γράπται [τι] ὅτι οἱ λαοὶ τοὺς χεῖρας μὲν τιμῶσι, ὁ καρδία αὐτῶν πρὸς πᾶν ἄλλο.

KJV Mark 7:6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

- **Rightly did:** Isa 29:13 Mt 15:7-9 Ac 28:25
- **hypocrites:** Mt 23:13-15 Lu 11:39-44
- **honors:** Eze 33:31 Ho 8:2,3 Joh 5:42 Jn 8:41,42,54,55 Jn 15:24 2 Ti 3:5 Titus 1:16 Jas 2:14-17
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 29:13 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And **honor Me with their lip service**, But **they remove their hearts far from Me**, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

Matthew 15:7-8+ "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.

### JESUS RESPONDS WITH SCRIPTURE

**And He said to them** - Jesus does not even address their accusation against the disciples! He [goes immediately for the jugular](#)! As Hiebert says "In verses 6–8 He condemned their position on the basis of the Scriptures which they professed to accept as authoritative, and in verses 9–13 He exposed the results of their position." Jesus is going to "unmask" these religious mask-wearers.

**Akin** - One thing Jesus consistently did was call out hypocrites and exposes them for who they truly are. In verses 6-8 Jesus makes no reference to the conduct of His disciples. He ignores that all together. He doesn't even get into a debate about washings. Instead, He exposes the true source of spiritual authority: is it "man made traditions" or is it the "Word of God?" What will determine how you think and live your life? Jesus begins with a scathing indictment calling out the Pharisees and scribes as "**hypocrites**," mask-araters! This is the only use of this word in all of Mark. They were nothing more than religious actors and pretenders. They were not real!

#### The Living Bible paraphrase Mark 7:5

These people speak very prettily about the Lord but they have no love for Him at all. Their worship is a farce, for they claim God commands the people to obey their petty rules.

**"Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written** ([grapho](#) in the [perfect tense](#) = written in past with present results

= "it stands written!" = permanently on record!) -- **Rightly** ([kalos](#)) means beautifully, finely, excellently and describes the accuracy of Isaiah's prediction. In other words, Jesus' words **rightly did Isaiah prophesy** speak of the 100% accuracy of every prophecy in the Bible. God said it. That settles it, whether we believe it or not and whether we like it or not (the Pharisees did not like this one)! It will come to pass just as Isaiah's prophecy was fulfilled in the pretentious [pontifications](#) of the Pharisees! Imagine the rising resentment and anger as Jesus spoke these words to these religious bigots! One thinks of Hebrews 4:12-13+ which says "the Word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." Indeed, the Word of God Himself (Jn 1:1+, Rev 19:13+) has just cut them to the quick and exposed their hypocrisy which will one day be judged with His eyes like flaming fire. In using the word hypocrites Jesus is describing the religious leaders as men who "speak from under a mask," men who are like religious actors in a grand play, ultimately in the grand drama of redemption, of which they were the avowed antagonists!

They professed great devotion to the Lord, but were inwardly corrupt.

-- William MacDonald

**Hypocrites** (5273)([hupokrites](#) from [hupó](#) = under + [krino](#) = to judge) referred originally to "one who judged from under the cover of a mask," thus, assuming an identity and a character which he was not. It carried the basic picture of a man giving off a judgment under the cover of a mask; it is the picture of a man assuming an identity and character different from what he really is. This person was the actor on the Greek stage, one who took the part of another.. It describes one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be something he or she is not. See Jesus' scathing denunciation of the Pharisees as the ultimate religious pretenders in Matthew 23:1-39 where He uses [hupokrites](#) seven (cf "seven" = perfection, completeness!) times! = Mt. 23:13; Mt. 23:14; Mt. 23:15; Mt. 23:23; Mt. 23:25; Mt. 23:27; Mt. 23:29.

**Wuest** - The Pharisees were religious actors, so to speak, in that they pretended to be on the outside, what they were not on the inside.

**Hiebert** - You hypocrites, literally "you, the hypocrites," marks them as conspicuous examples of hypocrites in all ages. Here for the first time is this charge explicitly made against the Pharisees and scribes.

**Will Durant** - The actor – who is always a male – is not disdained as in Rome, but is much honored; he is exempt from military service, and is allowed safe passage through the lines in time of war. He is called hypocrites, but this word means answerer – i.e., to the chorus; only later will the actor's role as an impersonator lead to the use of the word as meaning hypocrite. (The Story of Civilization II, The Life of Greece, by Will Durant, page 380)

## A "BIBLICAL DEFINITION" OF HYPOCRISY

**THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS** - These men are all words and show! The leaders continually made profession that they were honoring Yahweh! A modern saying is they give God "[lip service](#)," but lack life submission. It is good to honor God with one's lips, but only if our words truly reflect the worship in our heart! One is reminded of Paul's description of hypocrites who "profess to know God, but by their deeds (THEIR PRACTICE) they deny ([present tense](#) = CONTINUALLY DENY) Him, being detestable ([bdekluktos](#) from [bdeo](#) = TO STINK!) and disobedient and worthless for any good deed.(Titus 1:16-) In short, their earthly life is essentially USELESS in regard to eternal things. That is sad, but is the sad truth of every unbeliever.

**Honors** (5091)([timao](#) from [time](#) = honor, prize) means to show high regard respect for and so to count as valuable, to esteem, to value, to revere. To show respect to someone is to recognize their worth as a person (and if they are a parent to recognize the validity of their role and their authority). To honor is to manifest an attitude of love, respect, and disposition of one's heart which in the context of God or the child/parent relationship yields the fruit of obedience. Lenski comments that to honor reflects "the form love assumes towards those who are placed above us by God." All uses of [timao](#) in Mark - Mk. 7:6; Mk. 7:10; Mk. 10:19

**BUT** - Term of contrast. A "but" usually "changes direction," and in this case the meaning is clear from the context. There is a huge void between their verbal profession and their heart condition! Their concern was ritual, not relationship!

**THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME** - Jesus goes on to explain in part why their **heart is far away** from God, and it is because they hold the precepts of mortal men to be equivalent to the sound doctrine of the eternal God! Notice Jesus' association of **lips** with **heart**, a relationship He will explain in more detail in His parabolic saying in Mk 7:14-23.



**Far** is **porro** which means a great way off, at a distance. The verb **"is...away from"** is [apecho](#) (apo = "off from + echō = to have or hold, thus literally = "to hold off from") which in this context speaks of continual ([present tense](#)) separation in space or distance from a person, in this case from the Person of God. Note also that [apecho](#) is in the [active voice](#) which means this their volitional choice, the continual choice of their will! They are far off because they want to be! Woe! That is a frightening thought!

**THOUGHT** - Ponder that frightening statement "their heart is far away from" God! This was their practice in time but one day would be their punishment in eternity, when their "heart" would forever be far away from God. Paul alludes to this great gulf which will one day separate them from His holy presence writing that God will deal "out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, 10 when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, and to be marveled at among all who have believed—for our testimony to you was believed." (2 Th 1:8-10) Dear reader, do you know God? Is your heart near to Him? Then praise God. But if you do not know Him by grace through faith in Jesus (Eph 2:8-9+), your heart is far from Him today and will remain that way throughout eternity! Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved (Acts 16:31+).

**Jones** writes their "Religion had been smothered beneath ritual. Washing the hands counted for more than the devotion of the heart. They were careful of petty rules, and careless of the great commands of God."

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**David [Guzik](#) starts "meddling" asking -- Would God say something similar to us?**

- They attend church, but their heart is far from Me.
- They read their Bible, but their heart is far from Me.
- They pray eloquently, but their heart is far from Me.
- They contribute money, but their heart is far from Me.
- They do ministry, but their heart is far from Me.
- They love to sing, but their heart is far from Me.
- They talk to others about Jesus, but their heart is far from Me.

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**Brian Bill** - Here are some things we can learn from Jesus' response using Scripture....

- 1. Always go to Scripture and apply it to life today.** One of the things I admire about Billy Graham is how frequently he uses this phrase when he preaches: "The Bible says..." Here Jesus takes Isaiah and applies it directly to those playing spiritual charades.
- 2. Resist adding or subtracting from Scripture.** Revelation 22:18: "I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book."
- 3. It's easy to say or sing something and not really mean it.** Our lives don't always match what comes across our lips.
- 4. Scripture must always take supremacy over tradition.** Several well-known groups like Catholics, Mormons and Muslims put tradition on an equal or higher level than Scripture.

We have to watch ourselves as well because we don't want to let our preferences or traditions have more weight than God's Word. (Sermon)

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**J C Ryle** - The second thing, that demands our attention, is the uselessness of mere lip-service in the worship of God. Our Lord enforces this lesson by a quotation from the Old Testament: "Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

The heart is the part of man which God chiefly notices in religion. The bowed head, and the bended knee,—the grave face and the rigid posture,—the regular response, and the formal amen,—all these together do not make up a spiritual worshipper. The eyes of God look further and deeper. He requires the worship of the heart. "My son," He says to every one of us, "Give me thy heart."

Let us remember this in the public congregation. It must not content us to take our bodies to Church, if we leave our hearts at home. The eye of man may detect no flaw in our service. Our minister may look at us with approbation. Our neighbours may think us patterns of what a Christian ought to be. Our voice may be heard foremost in the praise and prayer. But it is all worse than nothing in God's sight, if our hearts are far away. It is only wood, hay, and stubble before Him who discerns thoughts, and reads the secrets of the inward man.

Let us remember this in our private devotions. It must not satisfy us to say good words, if our heart and our lips do not go together.

What does it profit us to be fluent and lengthy, if our imaginations are roving far away, while we are upon our knees?—It profits us nothing at all. God sees what we are about, and rejects our offering. Heart-prayers are the prayers He loves to hear. Heart-prayers are the only prayers that He will answer. Our petitions may be weak, and stammering, and mean in our eyes. They may be presented with no fine words, or well-chosen language, and might seem almost unintelligible, if they were written down. But if they come from a right heart, God understands them. Such prayers are His delight.

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#### Related Resources:

- [Should Catholic tradition have equal or greater authority than the Bible? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How should a Christian view tradition? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How much of the Bible was transmitted by oral tradition? | GotQuestions.org](#)

#### Mark 7:7 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'

Wuest - But in vain are they worshipping Me, while they are teaching doctrines, commandments of men.

NET Mark 7:7 They worship me in vain, teaching as doctrine the commandments of men.'

NLT Mark 7:7 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.'

ESV Mark 7:7 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.'

NIV Mark 7:7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.'

GNT Mark 7:7 μ την δ σ βοντα με διδ σκοντες διδασκαλ ας ντ λμαπα νθρ πων.

KJV Mark 7:7 Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

- **in vain:** 1Sa 12:21 Mal 3:14 Mt 6:7 15:9 1Co 15:14,58 Tit 3:9 Jas 1:26 Jas 2:20
- **the precepts:** De 12:32 Col 2:22 1Ti 4:1-3 Rev 14:11,12 22:18
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:9+ 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'"

Isaiah 29:13 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

English of the **Septuagint** of Isaiah 29:13 - And the Lord has said, This people draw nigh to me with their mouth, and they honour me with their lips, but their heart is far from me: but **in vain do they worship me, teaching the commandments and doctrines of men.**

### EMPTY RITUALISTIC HUMANISTIC WORSHIP

One could also refer to their ritualistic religious as "non-profit" (in vain) ministry! All of their religious efforts in time had no bearing on their eternal state.

**BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME** - Notice that Mark quotes not the original Hebrew but the Septuagint (see **in bold** above) Jesus explains why their worship of God is empty, futile and a waste of time. And it has to do with their teaching men's precepts. Jesus must have really stirred their anger when He declared their worship was senseless, to no end, pointless and without result. Jesus gave an example of **vain worship** declaring "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words." (Mt 6:7+) In short, empty rituals is "worship" which God does not accept. Their worship was futile and failed to attain their proposed end of righteousness and right relation to God (true righteousness is only bestowed by grace through faith).

**THOUGHT** - Do churches still do this today? Of course, they do and with great ceremony and pomp and

circumstance, but their hearts are far from God. If you are in that genre of church, you need to find a church that honors the Word of God and the God of the Word!

**Hiebert** on quote from Isaiah - Isaiah charged that the fear of Jehovah expressed by the Israelites was learned by rote from men without a conscious experience of its inner reality. In vain do they worship me admitted that they had a form of devout piety, but it was in vain, void of constructive results.

**Vain** (3155)(**maten** from accusative of **mate** = a folly) means groundless, invalid; and in a final sense, purposeless, useless, futile; and according to circumstances it may be both idle and vain. Thayer says it is an "adverb, from Pindar, Aeschylus down, in vain, fruitlessly: Matt. 15:9 and Mark 7:7, after Isa. 29:13 the Septuagint.\* Only 2x in NT - Mt 15:9, Mk 7:9. Septuagint - 1 Ki. 21:20; Ps. 35:7; Ps. 39:6; Ps. 39:11; Ps. 41:6; Ps. 63:9; Ps. 127:1 = "Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in **vain** who build it"; Ps. 127:2 = "It is **vain** for you to rise up early, To retire late." ; Prov. 3:30; Isa. 27:3; Isa. 28:17; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 30:4; Isa. 41:29; Jer. 2:30; Jer. 4:30; Jer. 8:8; Ezek. 14:23; Dan. 11:24

**Worship** (4576)(**sebomai** from **sébas** = reverential awe <> stem **seb** originally = "to fall back before", sacred, awe) means to hold in high esteem, show reverence or awe (veneration) by someone who is devout. The word has the atmosphere of veneration, fear, piety, devoutness. Always in the [middle voice](#) indicating personal involvement in the veneration. **Sebomai** stresses the *outward* (religious) expression of inner piety. Homer uses falling back in the sense of shrinking from. The bodily movement expressed an inner attitude of respect, of being impressed by something great and lofty. The subjects might be gods or men, the objects gods, men or things. The idea of shrinking from the gods leads to the sense of awe or reverence, first in the general form of respect, then in the more specifically religious form of veneration. **Sebomai** then means to live a lifestyle of godliness before others. You may say you worshiped God on Sunday. What was Monday like? Did you give in to the pagan darkness around you or did you express the fact that you are serving a higher King. First, RECOGNITION. Then, the LIFESTYLE. Finally, the WORSHIP. These religious leaders failed in all three categories!

**TEACHING AS DOCTRINES** ([didaskalia](#)) **THE PRECEPTS OF MEN** - **KJV** is more accurate "teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." **Teaching** is [didasko](#) in [present tense](#) indicating that their false teaching is sadly their continual activity, not only indoctrinating the pagans who become proselytes but also indoctrinating their fellow Jews, the result being that all are a "son of hell" like their spiritual "fathers," the Pharisees (Mt 23:15)! The NAS "**precepts**" is the Greek word **entalma** which means "that which is commanded as officially binding" and is used only 3x in the NT (Mt 15:9 Mk 7:7 Col 2:22).

**H A Ironside** wrote "To the spiritual mind, it is a question of unceasing wonder that men should be so ready to follow and even fearlessly contend for the authority of human traditions, while they are just as ready to ignore the plain teachings of the Word of God."

**Guzik** on **Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men** - This is one of the pillars of legalism. Taking a commandment or opinion of men and teaching or promoting it as a doctrine from God is what supports legalism. It gives man's word the same weight as God's word. Not everything in the Christian life is a matter of right and wrong. Some things—many things—are simply matters of personal conscience before God. The Scriptures do not command ritual washing before meals. **If you want to do it, then fine. Do it unto the Lord and without a sense of spiritual superiority before your brothers and sisters.** (Read Ro 14:14+) If don't want to do it, fine also. Don't do it unto the Lord, and don't look down upon those whose conscience compels them to do the ritual washing.

Creationist **Henry Morris** says "Those professing believers who reject or distort the Scriptures in order to accommodate some humanistic doctrine (evolution, uniformitarianism, abortionism) need to study this strong warning from Christ. In context, He was talking about the extra-Biblical humanistic legalism of the Pharisees, but the principle seems applicable to any displacement of Scripture by some human precept."

**Precepts** (1778)(**entalma** from [entellomai](#) = to charge, command) means a command (ment), an order, a write, a decree. what has been ordered commandment, precept, ordinance as officially binding. See also related word [entole](#). 3x in NT - Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Col. 2:22. 4x in the Septuagint - Job 23:11; Job 23:12; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 55:11

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## JESUS AND THE BIBLE Mark 7:1–23

Often churches will have laws, rules, and traditions which are unscriptural. As the result of this, many churches are nothing more than "religious clubs."

1. RITUAL WITHOUT REALITY—vv. 1–6
2. TRADITION WITHOUT TRUTH—vv. 7–13

### 3. CONFORMITY WITHOUT CLEANSING—vv. 14–23

To cleanse the life, we must begin with the heart. This comes about only by taking heed to God's Word—Psalm 119:9. When this comes about, man has a new heart and a new nature—2 Corinthians 5:17; Ezekiel 36:26. (Croft Pentz)

#### OBEYING GOD'S WORD—Mark 7

##### I. THE CRITICISM—vv. 1–8

- A. Complaint—vv. 1–3. Eating without washing the hands. This was a violation of a Jewish custom. The disciples did not follow this custom!
- B. Ceremony—vv. 4–5. This was only a Jewish ceremonial law. These laws were not God's laws!
- C. Conflict—v. 6. Prophecy of Isaiah 29:13. Lip service is not enough!
- D. Commandment—vv. 7–8. The commandments of Christ were put aside, and man-made laws were followed. They tried to force these ceremonial laws upon others.

##### II. THE COMMANDMENTS—vv. 9–13

- A. Rejection—v. 9. They rejected God's laws, accepting tradition!
- B. Respect—vv. 10–11. "For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: 'Honor your father and mother.' ... But you say it is perfectly all right for a man to disregard his needy parents, telling them, 'Sorry, I can't help you! For I have given to God what I could have given to you' " (LB).
- C. Results—vv. 12–13. God's commands had no influence upon them. The man-made laws meant more to them.

##### III. THE CLEANSING—vv. 14–23

- A. Contamination—vv. 14–16. "Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. 'All of you listen,' he said, 'and try to understand. Your souls aren't harmed by what you eat, but by what you think and say' " (LB).
- B. Concern—v. 17. People wanted to know the truth.
- C. Conscience—vv. 18–20. What you eat doesn't defile you, it's what comes out—meaning how you talk and act.
- D. Control—vv. 21–23. If the inner man is not controlled, then you will have these thirteen sins listed here. Note they come from within.

##### IV. THE COMPLETENESS—vv. 24–37

- A. Persistence—vv. 24–30. This woman would not give up. She was determined to have her daughter freed from the unclean spirit. Her persistence brought deliverance for her daughter.
- B. Power—vv. 31–35. Jesus takes time to heal a deaf man.
- C. Popularity—vv. 36–37. Jesus tells the people to keep silent. He always practiced humility. (Croft Pentz)

#### Mark 7:8 "Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."

Wuest Having abandoned the commandment of God, you are carefully and faithfully keeping those things of men delivered to you to be observed.

NET Mark 7:8 Having no regard for the command of God, you hold fast to human tradition."

NLT Mark 7:8 For you ignore God's law and substitute your own tradition."

ESV Mark 7:8 You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men."

NIV Mark 7:8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."

GNT Mark 7:8 φ ντες τ ν ντολ ν το θεο κρατε τε τ ν παρ δοσιν τ ν νθρ πων.

KJV Mark 7:8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do.

- **Neglecting the commandment:** Isa 1:12
- **the tradition:** Mk 7:3,4
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**NEGLECTING  
GOD'S WORD!**

## Related Passages:

Matthew 15:3+ And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

**Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men** - Don't miss this truth. Not only did these "vipers" add to the Word of God, but they actually had no regard for and in effect let go the commands of God! **Hold** is [krateo](#) which speaks of a powerful grip on something and here figuratively describes their zeal to ([present tense](#) = continually) keep the tradition carefully and faithfully. "The Pharisees were zealots when it came to observing their own traditions." (Wuest)

**Akin** - For the Pharisees the ultimate authority for spiritual life was Scripture and tradition, but if there was a conflict tradition won out and it did so every time. If the Bible is acknowledged at all it is only in passing. Sometimes it isn't even considered. We have our traditions. That is all we need. Can you provide a scriptural basis for what you believe and do? Are you a text-driven or tradition-driven? The difference is crucial

**Brian Bill** - They've dissed the commands of God and instead they "hold" or "grasp" to the tradition of men.

**Neglecting** is the verb [aphiemi](#) which ironically is used over 50 times in the NT in the context of forgiveness (of sending away and in a sense "neglecting" a sin), but in this context means to [neglect](#) or to pay no attention to and thus to fail to heed. Jesus used this same verb again in His strong warnings against the Pharisees declaring

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have **neglected** ([aphiemi](#)) the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without **neglecting** ([aphiemi](#)) the others. (Mt 23:23).

**Wuest** on [aphiemi](#) - The verb is *aphiēmi*, "to send away, to bid go away or depart, to send from one's self, to let alone, to disregard." It is used of teachers, writers, and speakers when presenting a topic, in the sense of "to leave, not to discuss." It means "to abandon, to leave as behind and done with in order to go on to another thing."

**MacDonald** - They professed great devotion to the Lord, but were inwardly corrupt. By elaborate rituals, they pretended to worship God, but they had substituted their traditions for the doctrines of the Bible. Instead of recognizing the Word of God as the sole authority in all matters of faith and morals, they evaded or explained away the clear demands of the Scripture by their tradition. (BBC)

**Tradition** ([3862](#)) see above on [paradosis](#). The word means "a giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing," thus, "something taught."

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**Before the Face of God (R C Sproul)** - Jesus called the people back to God's law because they had substituted their own traditions for it.

Why is the law important? Because it tells us what is pleasing to God. God's revelation, which clearly defines for us the difference between sin and righteousness, is found in his law.

Perhaps the idea of the law does not appeal to you. You say, "I'm free from the law. It has no moral or binding authority over me. Surely you are not going to ask me to study the law." Well, I am suggesting that you study the law, like you have never studied it before—not that you come under bondage to it, but that you might more clearly understand through it what sin is.

There is a vital connection between God's law and God's gospel. People all around us want to separate these two. Some want to live by the law and seem to have no time for the good news of salvation. If that is how you approach the law you are headed for a miserable life, because, apart from the gospel, the law kills.

On the other hand, others dismiss the law altogether and want the gospel and only the gospel. This, however, is impossible. You can have the law without the gospel and be miserable, but you cannot have the gospel without the law at all. You cannot grasp the gospel unless you know that Christ has come to satisfy the demands of the law. You cannot demonstrate your appreciation for the gospel unless you keep the law to the glory of God.

The Pharisees did not recognize Jesus because they had ignored the law of God, which would have pointed out their sin and also pointed to the coming Messiah. Instead, they invented and embraced their own legal traditions, which made them feel righteous and which blinded them to the identity of Jesus.

The same is true today. If we do not hold to God's law we will wind up with our own invalid traditions and be blinded to Christ.

**Coram Deo** - The way we purge our minds of human error and readjust to God's ways is by studying his standards. Read and study Psalm 119:97–104. List all the benefits of studying the law that are mentioned in these eight verses. If you have the time, do the same with verses 105–112. Where does the path in verse 105 lead?

**Adding Our Own Rules** Legalism wears several different hats. For instance, there is the belief that good works will earn salvation. We encounter legalism in people who joylessly obey scriptural commands because they want to “be right,” not because they want to please God. But the most common kind of legalism is almost universally a danger for us today—adding human laws to the laws of God. Social and cultural norms of our Christian culture can become more important to our faith than following the true rules given by God.

All too often Christians add their own prejudices to God's law and treat them as if they were on the same level. This is a great evil that has afflicted the church since the time of Cain and Abel. In Jesus' day the rabbis of the old covenant had added so much to the law of God that they had bound the people's conscience. Where God had left men free, the Pharisees had put them in chains. Much of Jesus' teaching and most of his conflicts with the Pharisees arose over this issue.

This does not mean that the church has no right to enforce rules and policies for the sake of good order, such as “No soft drinks in the auditorium.” Such man-made rules of order, however, must never be elevated to the level of Scripture and made binding on the consciences of people in the same way as Scripture.

When we elevate our rules to the level of Scripture we make our rules the test of true Christianity. There are many people inside and outside the church who think that a Christian is someone who doesn't dance, smoke, drink, go to movies, or play cards. Nowhere in the Bible does it say a Christian may never drink wine or play cards. Certainly the Bible addresses the need to respect our bodies or to avoid giving offense. Addressing with caution is not the same as prohibiting, however.

By making wine or cards the test of Christianity we come perilously close to blasphemy by misrepresenting Christ.

**Coram Deo** - When we obey the authentic commandments of God, other problems tend to take care of themselves. Think about any such issues in your congregation that should be handled in this manner. Prayerfully determine whether you are guilty of falling back into the “easy solution” of legalistically adding new rules to God's Word.

**Mark 7:9 He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition."**

Wuest And He was saying to them, In a very beautiful way you are constantly making the commandment of God null and void in order that that which has been delivered to you for observance, you may keep.

NET Mark 7:9 He also said to them, "You neatly reject the commandment of God in order to set up your tradition.

NLT Mark 7:9 Then he said, "You skillfully sidestep God's law in order to hold on to your own tradition.

ESV Mark 7:9 And he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition!

NIV Mark 7:9 And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!

GNT Mark 7:9 Κα λέγεν α το ς, Καλ ς θετε τε τ ν ντολ ν το θεο , να τ ν παρ δοσιν μ ν σι ητε.

KJV Mark 7:9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

- **You are experts** : 2Ki 16:10-16 Isa 24:5 29:13 Jer 44:16,17 Da 7:25 11:36 Mt 15:3-6 2Th 2:4
- **setting aside**, Mk 7:13 Ps 119:126 Ro 3:31 Ga 2:21
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Luke 10:16+ “The one who listens to you listens to Me, and the one who **rejects** ([atheteo](#)) you **rejects** ([atheteo](#)) Me; and he who **rejects** ([atheteo](#)) Me **rejects** ([atheteo](#)) the One who sent Me.”



John 12:48 "He who **rejects** ([atheteo](#)) Me and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

## TRAINED IN KEEPING TRADITION

He was also saying ([imperfect tense](#)) to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to(hina - purpose clause) **keep your tradition** - Note the strong clear contrast in Jesus makes in His declaration (**commandment of God** versus **your tradition**). I like the NLT paraphrase which says "You skillfully sidestep God's law." This must surely have cut these legalists like a sharp knife. **Experts** is actually the same Greek word ([kalos](#)) Jesus had just used to describe Isaiah's prophecy "rightly (kalos) did Isaiah prophecy of you hypocrites." (Mk 7:6). As **Wuest** observes "This (repetition of the adverb [kalos](#)) is **irony**, and **biting sarcasm**." ("In a **very beautiful way** you are constantly making the commandment of God null and void")

**Setting aside** is in the [present tense](#) indicating this was the common practice of the Pharisees to in essence annul or make inoperative God's Holy Word of Truth! This is an incredible realization. Think about this for a moment. These were the very men who were the most respected in Israel as religious leaders and teachers and they actually in effect set aside the only thing that could save their souls and bring eternal life. No wonder Jesus was so angry at these religious charlatans for they were on a fast track to hell and were taking multitudes with them (cf Mt 23:15, they were in a sense "murderers" like their father = Jn 8:44, cf Acts 13:10+).

The irony of Jesus' accusation is these men are so deceived, they actually think they are protecting and establishing the **commandment of God** when in fact that are making it invalid! Deception is a deadly "disease!"

[Spurgeon](#) - Behold, a pretender to profound thought informs us that Moses was in error, and Paul scarcely knew what he wrote about. These philosophic amenders of the gospel are as arrant triflers as the superstitious posture makers at whom they sneer. The Savior makes short work of human traditions and authorities. Your meats and your drinks, your fasting thrice in the week, your paying of the tithe of mint, anise, and cumin, your broad phylacteries and fringes, He waves them all away with one motion of His hand, and He comes straight to the real point at issue. He deals with the heart and with the sins which come out of it. He draws up a diagnosis of the disease with fearless truthfulness, and declares that meats do not defile men, that true religion is not a matter of observation or non-observation of washings and outward rites, but that the whole matter is spiritual, and has to do with man's inmost self, with the understanding, the will, the emotions, the conscience, and all else which makes up the heart of man. He tells us that defilement is caused by that which comes out of the man, not by that which goes into him. Defilement is of the heart, and not of the hands.

**Wuest** adds that setting aside "comes to mean "to thwart the efficacy of anything, to nullify, make void, frustrate." The Pharisees are charged by our Lord with thwarting the efficacy of that which has been laid down or prescribed by God, namely, His commandments. They have made God's Word null and void, have nullified it, frustrated it in its soul-saving work. This they did in order to keep their own tradition."

**Setting aside** (nullifying)([114](#))([atheteo](#) from **áthetos** = not placed from **a** = without + **thetós** = placed) means to do away with what has been laid down, to set aside and thus to regard as nothing, to declare invalid, to not recognize, to annul (make ineffective, inoperative or nonexistent), to spurn or to despise. **Atheteo** was also used of grain rejected by the inspector as unfit for food, which is a good parallel for here these Pharisees were rejecting the Bread of life (the Person Jesus and His Word of Life, the Bible, Mt 4:4+). **Thayer** writes that **atheteo** means "to act toward anything as though it were annulled; hence, to deprive a law of force by opinions or acts opposed to it, to transgress... to thwart the efficacy of anything, nullify, make void, frustrate...to render prudent plans of no effect (1Cor 1:19)...to reject, refuse, slight (eg, "the grace of God" Gal 2:21). In Classic Greek **atheteo** is used to describe setting aside of a treaty or promise. All uses of **atheteo** - Mk. 6:26; Mk. 7:9; Lk. 7:30+ = "the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by John."; Lk. 10:16; Jn. 12:48; 1 Co. 1:19; Gal. 2:21; Gal. 3:15; 1 Th 4:8; 1 Ti. 5:12; Heb. 10:28; Jude 1:8

**Tradition** ([3862](#)) see above on [paradosis](#)

**Akin** points out that "Not all **traditions** are bad. However, they do become bad when we put them on the same level as/or in the place of Scripture. It is possible to take a good thing, turn it into a God thing, thereby making it a bad thing. It is a "**Bible plus**" kind of religion. Adding to the Bible (cf Pr 30:6, Dt 4:2+ Dt 12:32 Rev 22:18,19+), **you in practice make void the Bible and nullify its truth and power in your life** (Mk 7:13). Jesus makes this crystal clear as He moves into round 2 with the Pharisees. It is no contest. The "beat down" is ugly! The exposure of sinful hearts painful...Man made rules and regulations became the object of obedience while God's commandments get set aside, left behind, "kicked to the curb." We don't need the Bible, the constitution and

bylaws have the final word in this church. I have seen it. I have heard it with my own ears. I like the wisdom of **Warren Wiersbe**, “*we must constantly beware lest **tradition** take the place of **truth**. It does us good to examine our church traditions in the light of God’s Word and to be courageous enough to make changes*” How often we foolishly push away the only reliable, trustworthy and infallible source of authority we have. It is an act of pure spiritual suicide. Have you seen the sad progression unfolding before our eyes: 1) teach the commandments of men (v.7); 2) leave the commandments of God (v.8); 3) reject the commandments of God (v.9); 4) make void the Word of God (v.13). And the tragedy of it all, we fail to see our hypocrisy in it. Oh, we know it is possible to be a hypocrite. We see it so clearly in others. It is when it is in us that we go spiritually deaf, dumb and blind.”

**Believer’s Study Bible** - As in the case of the Sabbath controversies (Mk 2:23-3:6), the Pharisees are guilty of ignoring the intent of the law by stressing the letter of the law and insisting on strict adherence to their own traditional interpretation of that law. The practice of calling something “Corban” (v11) is an illustration of this abuse. The term “Corban” means “an offering dedicated to God.” While the law clearly commanded honor for parents (v10), the Pharisees effectively nullified this commandment in the practice of Corban by allowing a callous child to declare his possessions “devoted to God” so that the parents would have no claim to assistance. Should the son regret his gift of Corban, the Pharisees would insist that the vow be kept in accordance with Nu30:2. Jesus rejects this practice of using the letter of one commandment to invalidate the intent of another.

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Christian Morality: Jesus’ Teaching on the Law](#)

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**J C Ryle** - The last thing that demands our attention in these verses, is the tendency of man’s inventions in religion to supplant God’s word. Three times we find this charge brought forward by our Lord against the Pharisees. “Laying aside the commandments of God, ye hold the traditions of men.”—“Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own traditions.”—“Making the Word of God of none effect through your traditions.”—The first step of the Pharisees, was to add their traditions to the Scriptures, as useful supplements. The second was to place them on a level with the Word of God, and give them equal authority. The last was to honour them above the Scripture, and to degrade Scripture from its lawful position. This was the state of things which our Lord found when He was upon earth. Practically, the traditions of man were everything, and the Word of God was nothing at all. Obedience to the traditions constituted true religion. Obedience to the Scriptures was lost sight of altogether.

It is a mournful fact, that Christians have far too often walked in the steps of Pharisees in this matter. The very same process has taken place over and over again. The very same consequences have resulted. Religious observances of man’s invention, have been pressed on the acceptance of Christians,—observances to all appearance useful, and at all events well-meant, but observances nowhere commanded in the word of God. These very observances have by and bye been enjoined with more vigour than God’s own commandments, and defended with more zeal than the authority of God’s own word. We need not look far for examples. The history of our own church will supply them.\*

Let us beware of attempting to add any thing to the word of God, as necessary to salvation. It provokes God to give us over to judicial blindness. It is as good as saying that His Bible is not perfect, and that we know better than He does what is necessary for man’s salvation. It is just as easy to destroy the authority of God’s word by addition as by subtraction, by burying it under man’s inventions as by denying its truth. The whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, must be our rule of faith,—nothing added and nothing taken away.

Finally, let us draw a broad line of distinction between those things in religion which have been devised by man, and those which are plainly commanded in God’s word. What God commands is necessary to salvation. What man commands is not. What man devises may be useful and expedient for the times; but salvation does not hinge on obedience to it. What God requires is essential to life eternal. He that wilfully disobeys it ruins his own soul.\*

**Mark 7:10 "For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH';**

Wuest For Moses said, Be paying due respect and reverence to your father and your mother. And the one who is constantly reviling father or mother, let him come to an end by death.

NET Mark 7:10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.'

NLT Mark 7:10 For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.'

ESV Mark 7:10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother

must surely die.'

NIV Mark 7:10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

GNT Mark 7:10 Μωϋσ ς γ ρ ε πεν, Τ μα τ ν πατ ρα σου κα τ ν μητ ρα σου, κα , κακολογ ν πατ ρα μητ ρα θαν τ τελευτ τω.

KJV Mark 7:10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death:

- **Honor:** Mk 10:19 Ex 20:12 De 5:16
- **He who speaks evil :** Ex 21:17 Lev 20:9 De 27:16 Pr 20:20 Pr 30:17 Mt 15:4
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:4+ (PARALLEL PASSAGE) "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.'

Exodus 20:12+ ("**FIFTH COMMANDMENT**") "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Deuteronomy 5:16; Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Exodus 21:17+ "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 20:9+ 'If there is anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother, his bloodguiltiness is upon him.

Deuteronomy 27:16 'Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

Proverbs 20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.

Proverbs 30:17 The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

### JESUS GIVES AN EXAMPLE OF HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP

**For** - Term of explanation. Always ask the Spirit to help you discern what the writer (speaker) is explaining. In this case Jesus is elaborating on the empty, traditional worship of the religious leaders. How sad to be accused of worthless worship by the Lord of lords, but now He gives these hard of hearing leaders a clear explain of their hypocrisy.

And do not miss the fact that again Jesus bases His words on Scripture, a good practice for all disciples to emulate!

**Moses said** - Notice that the Matthew 15:4 parallel has "**God said**" indicating that what **Moses said** was what he had been inspired by the Spirit to say (cf 2 Peter 1:21+). Notice that God could not have been clearer on the importance of honoring one's parents. In the OT it was a matter of "life and death!"

**HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER** - Jesus quotes the Fifth Commandment to undermine their mishandling of the Scriptures. **Honor** is **timao** in the [present imperative](#) which calls for continual, unhesitating tangible demonstration of reverence and respect to one's parents ([our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)). You would expect that these religious leaders who were zealous for keeping the Law of God and traditions of men would surely seek to obey this one of the Ten Commandments because it came pre-packaged with a promise of long life in the land! But sadly they had allowed their imperfect traditional teachings from sinful men to even take precedence of the perfect Law of the Holy God! Honoring one's parents clearly includes caring for them in their need.

**Wuest on honor (timao)** - The noun form, **timē**, carries with it the idea of "a valuing by which the price is fixed, an evaluation." Thus, the act of honoring carries with it a proper estimation of the value of a person or thing. In the case of honor due to parents, it is that respect or reverence for them in view of who and what they are, and their worth, which is their due.

**and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH** - So not only was there a blessing for honoring parents, there was also a curse for dishonoring them! And in spite of this "double motivation" to keep this commandment,

the religious leaders opted for the traditions of men! Note that speaks evil is not just an occasional slur (most children would have ended up stoned!) but is in the [present tense](#) which identifies this evil speaking or insulting one's parents as a continual or habitual practice!

**Be put to death** is verb [teleutao](#) "to come to an end." plus [thanatos](#) meaning death. Thus, the Greek is literally, "Let him come to an end by death."

**Wuest** agrees adding that **katalogeo** "does not mean "to curse" in the sense of Galatians 1:9+, where "accursed" is anathema ( [ναθεμα](#)) "a curse, a man accursed, devoted to the direst woes," this curse of course being a divine curse. There is no good reason to understand this construction here except in the durative sense, which means that the death penalty is inflicted on an habitual offender."

**Speaks evil** (2551) [kakologeo](#) from [kakos](#) = evil + [lego](#) = to speak) means literally to speak evil of, to curse (e.g., of parents in Mt 15:4, Mk 7:10). Kakologeo means to use unjustified and abusive language against someone. **Kakologeo** is used in Mark 9:39 in regard to someone who was casting out demons. **Louw-Nida** says **kakologeo** means to revile or "to insult in a particularly strong and unjustified manner." The derivative word **katalogos** was a "slanderer." Hellenistically, kakologeo means to imprecate evil on, to curse someone (Lxx - Pr. 20:20; Ezek 22:7; Ex 22:28).

Now ponder this scene a moment. Jesus is quoting the writings of Moses which the Pharisees claimed to revere, so they may have even been nodding their approval. But Jesus is setting a trap for these "vipers" and proceeds to shut the trap door in the next passage!

**Mark 7:11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),'**

Wuest But as for you, you are saying, If a man should say to his father and his mother, Korban, namely, a gift, whatever from me you may be profited

NET Mark 7:11 But you say that if anyone tells his father or mother, 'Whatever help you would have received from me is corban' (that is, a gift for God),

NLT Mark 7:11 But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.'

ESV Mark 7:11 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)-

NIV Mark 7:11 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is Corban' (that is, a gift devoted to God),

GNT Mark 7:11 μες δ λ γετε, νεπ νθρωπος τ πατρ τ μητρ, Κορβ ν, σπιν, Δρον, ν ξ μο φεληθς,

KJV Mark 7:11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, It is Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; he shall be free.

- **Corban:** Rather, "Let it be a {corban,}" a formula common among the Jews on such occasions; by which the Pharisees released a child from supporting his parents; and even deemed it sacrilege if he afterwards gave anything for their use. Mt 15:5 23:18 1Ti 5:4-8
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:5+ "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,"

### CHRIST CONFRONTS CRUEL CON OF CORBAN

[Con](#) means to persuade someone to do or believe something, typically by use of a deception.

**But you say** - This is a striking term of contrast, in this case contrasting men's words with God's commands!

**THOUGHT** - "Actually, if you ever hear yourself use the word "but" after referring to the Bible, you should hear alarms going off because whatever you say next is going to be unbiblical and therefore wrong." ([Brian Bill](#))

If (3rd. class cond. cl. where the cond. is possible) **a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help ([opheleo](#)) you is Corban (that is to say, given to God)**- The NLT paraphrase gives us a good sense of the meaning = "But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.'" Withholding money from needy parents in order to give it to God is in direct disobedience to God and is dishonoring God's Word and substituting a man-made tradition for God's Word. Basic human needs come first with God before religious offerings. In short the scribes and Pharisees were defiantly annulling God's clear command by which a son is required to honor his parents by providing for their necessities where they were in need. This is a great (sad) example of the oppressive burden of legalistic religion!

**Evans** - For readers unfamiliar with Jewish religious customs the evangelist Mark explains that Corban means given to God (v. 11). Josephus understands it similarly: " 'Corban' to God—meaning what Greeks would call a 'gift' " (Ant. 4.4.4 §73); "Now this oath (i.e., Corban) will be found in no other nation except the Jews, and, translated from the Hebrew, one may interpret it as meaning 'God's gift' " (Ag. Ap. 1.22 §167). A first-century ossuary inscription from Jebel Hallet et-Tûrî (south of Jerusalem, in the Kidron Valley) reads: "All that a man may find to his profit in this ossuary is an offering [i.e., Corban] to God from him who is within it." The Corban tradition was taken very seriously by the Jewish people. It was Pilate's dipping into the Corban offerings held in the temple, for secular (or profane) use, that led to a riot (cf. Josephus, J.W. 2.9.4 §175, "he provoked a fresh uproar by expending upon the construction of an aqueduct the sacred treasure known as Corban ... indignant at this proceeding, the populace formed a ring around the tribunal of Pilate ... large numbers of Jews perished, some from the blows that they received, others trodden to death by their companions in the ensuing flight"; see the parallel account in Ant. 18.3.2 §60–62). Note too that because Judas' thirty pieces of silver were "the price of blood," the ruling priests would not allow them to be placed in the "temple treasury," or (lit.) the Corbanas (cf. Matt. 27:6). (Ibid)

**Akin** - the Pharisees created a theological loophole that allowed them to circumvent, to get around, the clear command of God (vs. 11-12). They simply declared what they would have given to their parents "Corban" actually a Hebrew term referring to "a gift dedicated to God" (v. 11). Such a declaration, such a vow (Nu 30:2), had to be honored and it allowed them to dis their parents, neglect their needs, and feel good about it because it was done, after all, in service to God. I serve God by disobeying his expressed command to honor my parents? What kind of logic is that?!

**ILLUSTRATION** - Actor and comedian W. C. Fields was an avowed agnostic, so he surprised his friends when they discovered him reading a Bible while on his deathbed. When asked why, Fields replied, "I'm looking for a loophole."

**Brian Bill** - If someone pronounced something, "Corban," it became sacred and therefore could not be used to help care for parents. It was like a deferred gift that was pledged to the Temple but in many cases, it was never given. And since Numbers 30:2 warns against breaking a vow, once someone declared something Corban, they could never change their mind. It was actually a rather convenient and sinister way to look spiritual and yet get out of one of God's clear commands.

**William Kelly** explains that "The leaders had devised the scheme to secure property for religious purposes and to quiet persons from all trouble of conscience about the Word of God.... It was God Who called on man to honour his parents, and Who denounced all slight done to them. Yet here were men violating, under cloak of religion, both these commandments of God! This tradition of saying 'Corban,' the Lord treats not only as a wrong done to the parents, but as a rebellious act against the express commandment of God."

**Help** (profit) ([5623](#))([opheleo](#) from **ophéllo** = heap up or from **ophelos** = increase, profit) means to provide assistance, with emphasis upon the resulting benefit. To help, to be of benefit, to be of use, to be an advantage, to be advantageous. **Opheleo** is used in the sense of "bringing or gaining spiritual benefit" in Jn 6:63; 1Co. 13: 3; 14:6; Gal. 5: 2; Heb. 4: 2; 13:9. Opheleo occurs in the question "What does it profit a person ... ?" in Mt 16:26; Mk 8:36; Lk 9:25.

**Mounce** - Opheleo denotes the basic idea of benefiting through a particular condition or situation, hence, "to gain, profit, value."

**Corban** ([2878](#))(**korban**) is transliterated from Hebrew and refers to a gift offering to a deity that precludes that gift from being used in a non-sacred sphere. **Friberg** - "from the Hebrew **corban** (gift), a word designating the whole burnt offering among the levitical sacrifices; equivalent to *dw/ron* in the NT". **B D A G** - "something consecrated as a gift for God and closed to ordinary human use."

**Ryrie** explains that "If a son declared that the amount needed to support his parents was **Corban**, the scribes



said that he was exempt from his duty to care for his parents as prescribed in the law. Evidently, too, he was not really obliged to devote that sum to the Temple." In Mark 7:11 (Context - Mk 7:9-13), korban is used to excuse a person from doing his filial duty toward his parents. The rabbis actually allowed the mere saying of this word by an unfaithful son to prevent the use of needed money for the support of father or mother! Amazing! They must not have read nor understood the many uses of korban in Leviticus! The Rabbis not only justified such a son's trickery in Mk 7:11, but held that he was prohibited from using it (the gift) for father or mother, but he might use it for himself! Talk about conniving! This evil practice permitted a son to be released from any obligation to care for his parents, thus breaking the fifth commandment. He would claim his possessions belonged to God and were therefore unavailable for other purposes.

**Given** (1435)(**doron**) is that which is given or granted and stresses the gratuitous character of the gift. Anything given or bestowed. A gift is something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation. Something presented as an act of worship and/or devotion (Mt 2:11). **Doron** is used of offerings to God except in Eph 2:8 and Rev 11:10. In classical Greek doron referred to a votive (expressing a vow, wish or desire) gift or offering to a god (little g) or a gift from the gods, as well as a present given as a tribute or even as a bribe. Of the 166+ uses of doron in the non-apocryphal Septuagint, most are used in the context of an offering to God (cf Ge 4:4, Lev 1:2, 3, 10, 2:1, Nu 5:15, Dt 12:11, 1Chr 16:29, Jer 33:11, etc).

**Chuck Smith** - But you say, "Well, it's Corban. I've given that to God; you can't have that." And you could actually wipe out any obligation you had to a person by saying, "Anything I owe you is Corban. That is, it's dedicated to God, and therefore you can't have it." And by these traditions, they were actually negating the law of God. ([Commentary](#))

Paul gives some strong words to those who fail to help their needy parents...

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. (1 Timothy 5:8)

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#### Question - [What does Corban mean in Mark 7:11?](#)

**Answer:** The word **Corban** is only found in Mark 7:11. The interpretation is given in the same verse: "devoted to God as a gift." The word described something to be offered to God or given to the sacred treasury in the temple. If something was "Corban," it was dedicated and set apart for God's use.

In the context of Mark 7:1-13, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees about ritual without reality. The Pharisees had asked why the disciples did not wash their hands according to the ritualistic tradition of the elders (Mark 7:5). This hand-washing was not what we think of today with soap and water. It was not for cleanliness; rather, it was a prescribed ritual done as a show of piety.

In answer to the Pharisees' question, Jesus told them that they had rejected the commandment of God in order to keep their own tradition (Mark 7:6-9). Jesus gives the proof of their corruption of the Law by citing their use of "**Corban**." Moses had instructed God's people to "**honor their father and mother**" (Exodus 20:12), but the Pharisees negated that command by teaching that they could give money to the temple in lieu of helping their parents in need. Whatever money might have been used to provide for aging parents could be dedicated to the temple treasury instead. Saying, "**It is Corban**" would exempt a person from his responsibility to his parents. In other words, the Pharisees took a legitimate Corban offering and used it in an illegitimate and devious way to defraud their parents (and enrich themselves). Thus, the Law of God was nullified.

Jesus tells the Pharisees that their misuse of Corban was an evil rationale to avoid doing what they should. God never intended that the good principle of devoting something to the temple should be twisted to dishonor fathers and mothers. Ritual without reality is what the Pharisaic religion was all about. It was also ritual without righteousness and without relationship. Jesus taught that, without a personal relationship with God, ritual profits nothing, and the traditions of man should never usurp the authority of God's Word. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](#))

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#### **Mark 7:12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother;**

Wuest no longer are you permitting him to do anything for his father and his mother.

NET Mark 7:12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother.

NLT Mark 7:12 In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents.

ESV Mark 7:12 then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother,



NIV Mark 7:12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother.

GNT Mark 7:12 ο κ τ ι φ ε τ ε α τ ν ο δ ν ποι σαι τ πατρ τ μητρ ,

KJV Mark 7:12 And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother;

- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:6+ he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

### RELIGION THAT PREVENTS HONORING RELATIONSHIPS

**You no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother** - NLT = "In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents." Cranfield says "Once the formula was used (perhaps hastily), one evidently was not allowed to change one's mind."

Simply by saying "**Corban**" over a gift, a son could be freed of the obligation of having to give the gift to their needy parents! In essence the Pharisees and their evil traditions were promoting sinful behavior by sons! Talk about being deluded by doctrines of men! These Pharisees had no concept of the truth of God nor of the true and Living God. That's the deadly effect tradition can have on a heart! The heart becomes so unbelieving, so hardened, that it thinks it is doing right when in fact it is actually doing wrong. This is exactly what happened in the horrible days of the Judges where we read "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (NOTICE EVEN THOUGH THEY DID WRONG, THERE WERE SO DECEIVED, THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE DOING RIGHT!)" (Jdg 21:25+).

**Mark 7:13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."**

Wuest You are rendering void the authority of the Word of God by that which has been delivered to you to observe, which in turn you are delivering over (to another) to keep. And many things of this kind you are constantly doing.

NET Mark 7:13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like this."

NLT Mark 7:13 And so you cancel the word of God in order to hand down your own tradition. And this is only one example among many others."

ESV Mark 7:13 thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

NIV Mark 7:13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

GNT Mark 7:13 κυρο ντες τ ν λ γον το θεο τ παραδ σει μ ν παρεδ κατε· κα παρ μοια τοια τα πολλ ποιε τε.

KJV Mark 7:13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

- **the word:** Mk 7:9 Isa 8:20 Jer 8:8,9 Ho 8:12 Mt 5:17-20 15:6 Tit 1:14
- **such:** Eze 18:14 Ga 5:21
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### JESUS' SUMMARY JUDGMENT OF MEN'S TRADITIONS

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:6+ he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

**Brian Bill** - Jesus condemned and corrected the religious leaders for focusing on outward hypocrisy instead of inward holiness. The religious leaders were adamant about having clean hands; Jesus was all about having a clean heart.

To serious compassion imposture is provoking,  
and sincere truthfulness is grieved by the mockeries of pretense.

-[Spurgeon](#)

**Thus invalidating the Word of God by your tradition ([paradosis](#)) which you have handed down ([paradidomi](#) = passing on, transmit by teaching, passing on tradition) - One of the meanings of the Greek verb **invalidating** ([present tense](#) = continual negative effect of "traditions" and legalism) is to deprive of power! Ponder that thought regarding the effect of traditions (and legalism in general) on the power of the Word of God! Notice this summation by Jesus is essentially the third time He emphasizes the negative effect of traditions of men on the Word (Commandment) of God. (Mk 7:8 = neglecting, Mk 7:9 = setting aside and Mk 7:13 = invalidating). Traditions of men are legalistic burdens and Jesus says they counteract the Word of Truth. In John 8:31-32 "Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." But here Jesus is saying in essence that the traditions of men will blunt the liberating effect of the truth of the Word of God and will cut off the flow of grace because of legalistic rules!**

**And you do ([present tense](#) = continually) many (not a few!) things such as that** - What Jesus is saying is that the corrupt concept of Corban is just one example of how their traditions invalidated the **Word of God!** (see quote below from Mt 23:23) The clear implication is that many other oral traditions set aside the written Law! Notice the pronoun "**you**" so He is directing this accusation to the scribes and Pharisees. One can only imagine what was going through their mind as Jesus exposed their horrible practice of Corban and alluded to other similar scams they practiced which deprived the Word of God of its authority and power! While they should have confessed and repented, subsequent events demonstrate their hearts only hardened even more!

Matt. 23:23, "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others.

**Akin** - Jesus tells them (v. 13) it is the kind of reasoning that 1) makes void the word of God, 2) sets up man-made traditions over God's commands and 3) opens the door for many more such actions that reveals the hardness of our hearts, the hypocrisy of our worship, and the disobedience of our actions, all in the name of religion! These are not atheist and secularist. These are the religious and supposedly spiritual. Bottomline: they have placed their traditions in the place of Scripture and themselves in the place of God! **The heart truly is an idol factory**, and religious traditions are some of its best tools. This truth should concern us all. I may be as guilty as the Pharisees of Jesus' day and not even see it.

**Bruce** - The receivers are also transmitters of the tradition, adding their quota to the weight of authority. (EGT)

**Invalidating** (208) ([akuroo](#) from **a** = without + **kuroo** = to confirm) was a legal technical term meaning to make invalid or void, to annul (Gal 3:17+) Often used of annulling wills and contracts. It means to cancel, deprive of power. Used in Mt 15:6 and Mk 7:13 describing depriving divine law of authority (and power) by placing priority on human traditions! In the OT only in the apocryphal writings - 1 Es. 6:31; 4 Ma. 2:1; 4 Ma. 2:3; 4 Ma. 2:18; 4 Ma. 5:18; 4 Ma. 7:14; 4 Ma. 17:2

**Tradition** (3862) see above on [paradosis](#)

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**William MacDonald makes a great point** - One of the great lessons in this passage is that we must constantly test all teaching and all tradition by the Word of God, obeying what is of God and rejecting what is of men. At first a man may teach and preach a clear, scriptural message, gaining acceptance among Bible-believing people. Having gained this acceptance, he begins to add some human teaching. His devoted followers who have come to feel that he can do no wrong follow him blindly, even if his message blunts the sharp edge of the Word or waters down its clear meaning. It was thus that the scribes and Pharisees had gained authority as teachers of the Word. But they were now nullifying the intent of the Word. The Lord Jesus had to warn the people that it is the Word that accredits men, not men who accredit the Word. The great touchstone must always be, "What does the Word say?" (BBC)

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**Brian Bill** draws some conclusions from Jesus' confrontation of the deadly effect of the traditions of men - A legalist is one who believes that performance is the way to gain favor with God. Legalism is the human attempt to gain salvation or prove our spirituality by outward conformity to a list of religious "do's" and "don'ts." It's often disguised in spiritual beliefs and behavior. Here are some observations about legalism. You may want tighten your seatbelt because we're about to go through some turbulence.

### **1. We tend to think others are legalistic, but that we're not.**

The fact is that we're all legalistic by nature. We tend to judge others by our own standards of what is acceptable and what isn't. In essence, we think our sins smell better than other people's because we have very little tolerance for people who sin differently than we do.

### **2. Legalism is highly contagious.**

While it's usually less conscious and systematized in our minds than it was among the Pharisees and the scribes, legalism can spread like a bad virus through an entire congregation. That's why Jesus reserved some of his harshest criticism for legalistic list-makers.

### **3. Legalism can take a vibrant faith and make it dull and lifeless.**

It can evaporate enthusiasm, jettison joy, and stifle spirituality. Instead of finding freedom through Christ, many believers become burdened by a bunch of rules and regulations.

### **4. Legalism produces large quantities of self-righteousness, judgment and condemnation.**

It majors in guilt and misguided sacrifice, urging its followers to evaluate their relationship with God on the basis of standards and scores – and expects others to do the same. Superficial spirituality short-circuits the work of grace.

### **5. Legalism makes us narrow and divisive.**

The legalist insists that everyone live up to the standard they have adopted. In other words, everyone needs to be like me. When we think this way, we miss the delight of diversity in the church.

### **6. Legalism makes it impossible for people to see Jesus.**

There is nothing that pushes someone away faster than a list of rules and regulations when we inadvertently portray Jesus as a drill sergeant instead of the Savior.

**Most of us fall into legalism without trying to do so.** Let me illustrate.

Several years ago I asked a woman from China and a man from Puerto Rico to lead us in prayer for the persecuted church (By the way, we'll hear from the Puerto Rico Go Team next weekend). It was beautiful to hear Hector pray for the persecuted in Spanish. When Stella prayed in Mandarin, she told us she was going to kneel and very graciously invited us to do the same, if we wanted to. I followed her lead and knelt. My motives were good initially as we interceded for the needs of beleaguered believers around the world. But then I took a peek and noticed only a small number were on their knees. A seed of judgmentalism began to germinate, as I secretly wondered why others weren't as spiritual as I was. Now, work with me on this. Imagine that because I found kneeling to be so helpful, I began kneeling during my quiet times. When I led in prayer in services I knelt as well. And then I started telling everyone else they had to kneel when they prayed. I might even quote some Scripture. And when I didn't see people kneeling I started to feel angry but also spiritually smug because at least I was doing what everyone else should be doing. Do you see how subtle and sneaky legalism is? Its weeds are under the surface in each of our lives. Kneeling to pray is a good thing but it can easily become the standard by which we judge other people's spirituality. In short, if we're not careful we'll default to a performance-based, hypocritical kind of faith. By the way, there are other acceptable prayer postures in the Bible – sitting, standing, lying down, bowing, hands in the air or praying to stay awake during sermons.

One of the best ways to not slide into spiritual superficiality and ritualistic religion is by serving those in need. James 1:27 says: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

**Mark 7:14 After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, 'Listen to Me, all of you, and understand:**

Wuest And, having called to Himself again the crowd, He was saying to them, Hear Me, all, and understand.

NET Mark 7:14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand.

NLT Mark 7:14 Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "All of you listen," he said, "and try to

understand.

ESV Mark 7:14 And he called the people to him again and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand:

NIV Mark 7:14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen to me, everyone, and understand this.

GNT Mark 7:14 Κα προσκαλεσ μενος π λιν τ ν χλον λεγεν α το ς, κο σατ μου π ντες κα σ νετε.

KJV Mark 7:14 And when he had called all the people unto him, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one of you, and understand:

- **when:** 1Ki 18:21 22:28 Ps 49:1,2 94:8 Mt 15:10 Lu 12:1,54-57 20:45-47
- **and understand:** Pr 8:5 Isa 6:9 Ac 8:30
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:10+ After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, "Hear and understand.

### JESUS' CALL TO ALL: HEAR! UNDERSTAND!

This "**ALL**" includes each of us, this writer and you the reader! Lord, give us **ALL** ears to hear, minds to understand and hearts to obey (enabled by Your Spirit). In Jesus' Name. Amen

**Spurgeon** - If a man fails to **understand** more deep and mysterious truths, yet let him **understand** this, for an error here is an error upon a vital point, and may lead to most serious damage, if not to eternal ruin. **We are all of us called upon therefore to hear and to understand this day** what the Savior says in the words of the text. Let me read them again, that they may sink into your minds.

**Expositors** remarks; "The people must have retired a little into the background, out of respect for the Jerusalem magnates."

**Wuest** - Our Lord now takes the people into the discussion. He uncovers the hypocrisy of the Pharisees so that the people can see the true character of their religious leaders. The question at issue was concerning ceremonial defilement incurred by disobedience to the man-made regulations of the Pharisees. Jesus proceeds to show the fallacy of these regulations.

**After He called** ([proskaleo](#) - summoned to himself) **the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, 'Listen to Me, all of you, and understand** - Both **commands** are in the [aorist imperative](#) calling for their immediate attention. The Jews would have been very familiar with "**Listen**" for this was the same Greek verb ([akouo](#)) used in their famous "**Shema**" in Dt 6:4 (Hear, O Israel)! This is urgent! Jesus wants the **ALL** to hear a parable on the condition of our heart. They are to listen and learn because what He is about to say is extremely important. Mark used understand ([suniemi](#)) in Mark 4:11-12+ in describing Jesus' beginning to speak in parables. In fact the words Jesus speaks in Mark 7:14-23 constitute a parabolic teaching.

**Understand** (4920) ([suniemi](#) from [sun/syn](#) = with + [hiemi](#) = send; cf [sunesis](#)) literally means to send together or bring together. The idea is to put together "pieces of the puzzle" (so to speak) and to exhibit comprehension. **Suniemi** describes the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between the various concepts and see relationships between them. In short, this verb describes the exercise of the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness. The noun **sunesis** was originally used by Homer in the Odyssey to describe the running together or a flowing together of two rivers. Used 25x mostly in the Gospels - Mt. 13:13; Mt. 13:14; Mt. 13:15; Mt. 13:19; Mt. 13:23; Mt. 13:51; Mt. 15:10; Mt. 16:12; Mt. 17:13; Mk. 4:12; Mk. 6:52; Mk. 7:14; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 8:21; Lk. 2:50; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 18:34; Lk. 24:45; Acts 7:25; Acts 28:26; Acts 28:27; Ro. 3:11; Ro. 15:21; 2 Co. 10:12; Eph. 5:17

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Mark 7:14-23 From the Choice Gleanings Calendar comes this story: On one occasion Hudson Taylor wanted to teach a spiritual lesson, so he filled a glass with water and placed it on the table before him. While he was speaking, he pounded his fist hard enough to make the water splash onto the table. He then explained, "You will come up against much trouble. But when you do, remember only what's in you will spill out." - Our Daily Bread

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**J C Ryle - Mark 7:14-23** - WE see in the beginning of this passage, how slow of understanding men are in spiritual things. "Hearken," says our Lord to the people, "hearken unto me every one of you and understand."—"Are ye so without understanding?" He says to His disciples,—“Do ye not perceive?”

The corruption of human nature is an universal disease. It affects not only a man's heart, will, and conscience, but his mind, memory, and understanding. The very same person who is quick and clever in worldly things, will often utterly fail to comprehend the simplest truths of Christianity. He will often be unable to take in the plainest reasonings of the Gospel. He will see no meaning in the clearest statements of evangelical doctrine. They will sound to him either foolish or mysterious. He will listen to them like one listening to a foreign language, catching a word here and there, but not seeing the drift of the whole. "The world by wisdom knows not God." (1 Cor. 1:21.) It hears, but does not understand.

We must pray daily for the teaching of the Holy Ghost, if we would make progress in the knowledge of divine things. Without Him, the mightiest intellect and the strongest reasoning powers will carry us but a little way. In reading the Bible and hearing sermons, everything depends on the spirit in which we read and hear. A humble, teachable, child-like frame of mind is the grand secret of success. Happy is he who often says with David, "Teach me thy statutes." (Psalm 119:64.) Such an one will understand as well as hear.

We see, in the second place, from this passage, that the heart is the chief source of defilement and impurity in God's sight. Moral purity does not depend on washing or not washing,—touching things or not touching them,—eating things or not eating them, as the Scribes and Pharisees taught. "There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, these are they that defile the man."

There is a deep truth in these words which is frequently overlooked. Our original sinfulness and natural inclination to evil are seldom sufficiently considered. The wickedness of men is often attributed to bad examples, bad company, peculiar temptations, or the snares of the devil. It seems forgotten that every man carries within him a fountain of wickedness. We need no bad company to teach us, and no devil to tempt us, in order to run into sin. We have within us the beginning of every sin under heaven.

We ought to remember this in the training and education of children. In all our management we must never forget, that the seeds of all mischief and wickedness are in their hearts. It is not enough to keep boys and girls at home, and shut out every outward temptation. They carry within them a heart ready for any sin, and until that heart is changed they are not safe, whatever we do. When children do wrong, it is a common practice to lay all the blame on bad companions. But it is mere ignorance, blindness, and foolishness to do so. Bad companions are a great evil no doubt, and an evil to be avoided as much as possible. But no bad companion teaches a boy or girl half as much sin as their own hearts will suggest to them, unless they are renewed by the Spirit. The beginning of all wickedness is within. If parents were half as diligent in praying for their children's conversion, as they are in keeping them from bad company, their children would turn out far better than they do.\*

We see, in the last place, from this passage, what a black catalogue of evils the human heart contains. "Out of the heart of men," says our Lord, "proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: all these evil things come from within."

Let us distinctly understand, when we read these words, that our Lord is speaking of the human heart generally. He is not speaking only of the notorious profligate, or the prisoner in the jail. He is speaking of all mankind. All of us, whether high or low, rich or poor, masters or servants, old or young, learned or unlearned,—all of us have by nature such a heart as Jesus here describes. The seeds of all the evils here mentioned lie hid within us all. They may lie dormant all our lives. They may be kept down by the fear of consequences,—the restraint of public opinion,—the dread of discovery,—the desire to be thought respectable,—and, above all, by the almighty grace of God. But every man has within him the root of every sin.

How humble we ought to be, when we read these verses! "We are all as an unclean thing" in God's sight. (Isai. 64:6.) He sees in each one of us countless evils, which the world never sees at all, for He reads our hearts. Surely of all sins to which we are liable, self-righteousness is the most unreasonable and unbecoming.

How thankful we ought to be for the Gospel, when we read these verses! That Gospel contains a complete provision for all the wants of our poor denied natures. The blood of Christ can "cleanse us from all sin." The Holy Ghost can change even our sinful hearts, and keep them clean, when changed. The man that does not glory in the Gospel, can surely know little of the plague that is within him.

How watchful we ought to be, when we remember these verses! What a careful guard we ought to keep over our imaginations, our tongues, and our daily behaviour! At the head of the black list of our heart's contents, stand "evil thoughts." Let us never forget that. Thoughts are the parents of words and deeds. Let us pray daily for grace to keep our thoughts in order, and let us cry earnestly and fervently, "lead us not into temptation."

**Mark 7:15 there is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him; but the things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man.**

Wuest - There is not even one thing that from the outside of the man, entering into him, is able to defile him. But the things proceeding out from the man are those that defile the man.

NET Mark 7:15 There is nothing outside of a person that can defile him by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles him."

NLT Mark 7:15 It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart. "

ESV Mark 7:15 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."

NIV Mark 7:15 Nothing outside a man can make him 'unclean' by going into him. Rather, it is what comes out of a man that makes him 'unclean.' "

GNT Mark 7:15 ο δ ν σιν ξωθεν το νθρ που ε σπορευ μενον ε ς α τ ν δ ναι κοι ν σαι α τ ν, α λ τ κ το νθρ που κ πορευ μεν σιν τ κοι ν ναι τ ν νθρωπον.

KJV Mark 7:15 There is nothing from without a ma

- **nothing:** Mk 7:18-20 Lev 11:42-47 Ac 10:14-16,28 11:8-10 15:20,21 Ro 14:17 1Co 10:25 1Ti 4:3-5 Tit 1:15 Heb 9:10 13:9
- **but:** Mk 7:20-23 Pr 4:23 Mt 12:34 15:16
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:11+ "It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."

## THE TRUE "PATHOGENESIS" OF DEFILEMENT

**Pathogenesis** - The pathogenesis of a disease is the biological mechanism that leads to a diseased state. The term can also describe the origin and development of the disease, and comes from the Greek pathos ("suffering", "disease") and genesis ("creation").

**Brian Bill** - Jesus is about to say something shocking to people who have been taught their whole lives about the importance of keeping the outside looking good. Many today believe something similar...This is radical because the religious thinking at that time was that if you could just stay far enough away from all defiling agents, you'd be good before God. They had concluded that sin came about from external stuff like things you eat, touch and wear. Jesus blows this up by showing that we're spiritually defiled because we are sinfully depraved. My fundamental problem is not my environment or education or my upbringing. My problem is sin and it resides in my heart. The heart of my problem is the problem of my heart. That's why outward things like education, politics, self-help programs, social reform and even religious practices are powerless to change the human heart.

**There is nothing outside the man which can defile him if it goes into him-** **Nothing** means exactly that "NOTHING!" Of course in the context Jesus is speaking of food (He is not saying pornography from outside will not defile, for it will, but that is not His context). This is radical teaching to these Jews who had been taught by the Pharisees that they must observe external rituals (in this context related to eating) in order to attain ceremonial purity. Note that the **key word** in this section is **defile**(4x in Mark's account and 5x in Matthew's account - Mt 15:11 = twice, Mt 15:18, Mt 15:30 = twice).

**Defile** (2840) (**koinoo** from **koinos** = common, defiled, unclean, unholy, profane, that which lies common or open to all) means to make koinos or common. In Scripture, **koinoo** means to make unclean, to profane (treat something with irreverence or contempt), to desecrate (to treat disrespectfully, irreverentially, outrageously), to render unhallowed, to pollute, to make or cause to become ritually unacceptable. The idea of **koinoo** is a violation of ritual holiness. **Koinoo** - Classic Greek - to make one a participant in something, to have a share in, to unite. All NT uses.- Matt. 15:11; Matt. 15:18; Matt. 15:20; Mk. 7:15; Mk. 7:18; Mk. 7:20; Mk. 7:23; Acts 10:15; Acts 11:9; Acts 21:28; Heb. 9:13

**But** - Term of contrast. Contrast the external versus the internal.

**The things which proceed out of the man are what defile the man-** Jesus states that defilement is an internal problem, not an external problem as the Pharisees had taught the multitudes, but was an internal problem.



**William Barclay** wrote "Although it may not seem so now, this passage, when it was first spoken, was well-nigh the most revolutionary passage in the New Testament."

**Akin** - The fruit of sin has its root in every human heart! Every human heart has the root of every human sin in it! You see, it is entirely possible to look nice on the outside while being dead on the inside. The most deadly contamination is not what I touch. The most deadly contamination is what I think! Proverbs 23:7: "As a man thinks in his heart so is he!"

**Wuest** - When our Lord spoke of that which enters a man in Mk 7:15, He was speaking of food. That does not make a man **ceremonially unclean**, (does not defile - **koinoo**) even though he eat it with **ceremonially unwashed hands**. When He spoke of that which comes out of a man which defiles him, He was referring to the extra-biblical teachings of the Pharisees which defiled them in the sense that these teachers were, by their teachings which were in direct opposition to God's Word, constituted false teachers, thus, not hallowed or set apart for God.

**Proceed out** (1607)(**ekporeuomai** from **ek** = out + **poreuomai** = come, go) to make to go forth, to go forth. Friberg - (1) literally; (a) absolutely go from or out of a place, depart from (Mk 6.11); go out (Acts 9.28); (b) of the dead coming out of tombs emerge, come forth (Jn 5.29); (c) of demons come out ( Mt 17.21); (d) of a journey set out (Mk 10.17); (2) figuratively; (a) of words or thoughts proceed from, go or come out of the mouth, i.e. be spoken (Mt 15.11); (b) of a report spread abroad, tell everywhere (Lk 4.37); (c) of the Spirit proceed from (Jn 15.26); (d) of water flow out, stream forth (Rev 22.1) **BDAG** - 1. to be in motion from one area to another, 2. to come forth from, come/go out, proceed, in imagery, of things, words, or thoughts Mt 15:11, Lk 4:22; Eph 4:29. What comes out of a pers. Mk 7:15, 20, 21, 23. Mt 4:4 (Dt 8:3 ). Of truth ev. Hm 3:1. Of fire, lightning, etc. (Job 41:12): lightning (Ezek 1:13) Rev 4:5; fire Rev 9:17,18; 11:5; fiery locusts Hv 4, 1, 6. Of streams of water flow out (Ezek 47:1, 8 , 12) Rev 22:1 Of a sword project Rev 1:16; 19:15; reports about him spread into every place Lk 4:37.

**Ekporeuomai** - 34x in 34v - came(1), come(1), come forth(1), comes(1), coming(1), eliminated\*(1), falling(1), flows(1), go(4), going(4), leave(1), leaving(2), moving about freely\*(1), proceed(6), proceeded(1), proceeds(4), setting(1), spreading(1), went(1). Matt. 3:5; Matt. 4:4; Matt. 15:11; Matt. 15:18; Matt. 17:21; Matt. 20:29; Mk. 1:5; Mk. 6:11; Mk. 7:15; Mk. 7:19; Mk. 7:20; Mk. 7:21; Mk. 7:23; Mk. 10:17; Mk. 10:46; Mk. 11:19; Mk. 13:1; Lk. 3:7; Lk. 4:22; Lk. 4:37; Jn. 5:29; Jn. 15:26; Acts 9:28; Acts 19:12; Acts 25:4; Eph. 4:29; Rev. 1:16; Rev. 4:5; Rev. 9:17; Rev. 9:18; Rev. 11:5; Rev. 16:14; Rev. 19:15; Rev. 22:1

Septuagint - over 150x - Gen. 2:10; Gen. 24:11; Gen. 24:13; Gen. 24:15; Gen. 24:45; Gen. 34:24; Exod. 5:20; Exod. 7:15; Exod. 13:4; Exod. 13:8; Exod. 14:8; Exod. 16:29; Exod. 25:32; Exod. 25:33; Exod. 25:35; Exod. 33:7; Exod. 33:11; Exod. 34:34; Exod. 40:17; Num. 1:3; Num. 1:20; Num. 1:22; Num. 1:24; Num. 1:26; Num. 1:28; Num. 1:30; Num. 1:32; Num. 1:34; Num. 1:36; Num. 1:38; Num. 1:40; Num. 1:42; Num. 1:45; Num. 12:12; Num. 26:2; Num. 31:27; Num. 31:28; Num. 31:36; Num. 32:24; Deut. 8:3; Deut. 8:7; Deut. 11:10; Deut. 23:4; Deut. 23:23; Deut. 24:9; Deut. 25:17; Deut. 28:6; Deut. 28:19; Deut. 31:2; Jos. 2:10; Jos. 6:1; Jos. 15:3; Jdg. 1:24; Jdg. 2:15; Jdg. 8:1; Jdg. 8:30; Jdg. 9:33; Jdg. 11:31; Jdg. 11:34; Jdg. 13:14; 1 Sam. 11:7; 1 Sam. 14:11; 1 Sam. 17:8; 1 Sam. 17:35; 1 Sam. 18:13; 1 Sam. 18:16; 1 Sam. 20:11; 1 Sam. 24:14; 2 Sam. 16:5; 2 Sam. 18:4; 2 Sam. 19:7; 2 Sam. 19:19; 1 Ki. 2:30; 1 Ki. 4:33; 1 Ki. 8:9; 1 Ki. 10:29; 1 Ki. 15:17; 1 Ki. 20:18; 1 Ki. 22:35; 2 Ki. 11:7; 2 Ki. 11:8; 2 Ki. 11:9; 1 Chr. 5:18; 1 Chr. 7:11; 1 Chr. 12:33; 1 Chr. 12:36; 1 Chr. 27:1; 2 Chr. 15:5; 2 Chr. 23:7; 2 Chr. 26:11; 2 Chr. 33:14; Job 3:16; Job 29:7; Job 38:8; Job 38:24; Job 38:29; Job 39:21; Job 41:19; Job 41:20; Job 41:21; Ps. 19:5; Ps. 41:6; Ps. 65:1; Ps. 68:7; Ps. 88:8; Ps. 89:34; Prov. 3:16; Isa. 36:16; Jer. 5:6; Jer. 6:25; Jer. 17:16; Jer. 17:19; Jer. 17:21; Jer. 19:10; Jer. 21:9; Jer. 22:10; Jer. 23:19; Jer. 25:32; Jer. 38:2; Ezek. 1:13; Ezek. 9:7; Ezek. 12:4; Ezek. 14:22; Ezek. 33:30; Ezek. 44:19; Ezek. 46:10; Ezek. 47:1; Ezek. 47:8; Ezek. 47:12; Dan. 7:10; Dan. 10:20; Dan. 11:30; Amos 5:3; Mic. 1:3; Zech. 2:3; Zech. 5:3; Zech. 5:5; Zech. 5:6; Zech. 5:9; Zech. 6:1; Zech. 6:5; Zech. 6:6; Zech. 6:7; Zech. 6:8; Zech. 8:10;

**Mark 7:16 "If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear."**

**NOTE:** Most manuscripts do not contain this verse.

**NET NOTE** - Most later Manuscriptus add 7:16 "Let anyone with ears to hear, listen." This verse is included in A D W Q !(1, 13 )33 Ū latt sy, but is lacking in important Alexandrian MSS and a few others (a B L D\* 0274 28 2427). **It appears to be a scribal gloss** (see Mk 4:9 and Mk 4:23), perhaps introduced as a reiteration of the thought in Mark 7:14 , and **is almost certainly not an original part of the Greek text of Mark**. The present translation follows NA(27 )in omitting the verse number, a procedure also followed by a number of other modern translations.

**Mark 7:17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, His disciples questioned Him about the parable.**

Wuest And when He entered into residence away from the crowd, His disciples went to asking Him about the parable.

BGT Mark 7:17 Κα τε ε σ λθεν ε ς ο κον π το χλου, πηρ των α τ ν ο μαθητα α το τ ν παραβολ ν.

NET Mark 7:17 Now when Jesus had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable.

NLT Mark 7:17 Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowd, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the parable he had just used.

ESV Mark 7:17 And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable.

NIV Mark 7:17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable.

GNT Mark 7:17 Κα τε ε σ λθεν ε ς ο κον π το χλου, πηρ των α τ ν ο μαθητα α το τ ν παραβολ ν.

KJV Mark 7:17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

- Mk 4:10,34 Mt 13:10,36 Mt 15:15
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:15+ Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable to us."

Mark 4:10; 34 As soon as He was alone, His followers, along with the twelve, began asking Him about the parables.34 and He did not speak to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.

### DISCIPLES' PRIVATE SESSION WITH JESUS

**When he had left the crowd and entered the house**- Which house? Possibly the house of Peter in Capernaum. In any event it was a location isolated from the masses.

**His disciples questioned Him about the parable**- Jesus moves from the crowd of Jews to the core of the disciples. Mt 15:15 says it was **Peter** who spoke up (it was usually "open mouth, insert foot" Peter!) and ask Jesus "Explain the parable to us." As stated above, Jesus' teaching was radical, for all the Pharisees had taught was about watching the "externals" so they would not become defiled.

**Wuest on questioned** - The verb is in the imperfect tense, the inceptive imperfect, "went to asking." They lost no time. The moment they were free from the crowd and in the privacy of Peter's home, they plied our Lord with questions regarding the interpretation of the parable.

**Mark 7:18 And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him,**

Wuest And He says to them, In this manner, also, as for you, are you without understanding? Do you not know that everything which from the outside enters into the man, is not able to defile him,

NET Mark 7:18 He said to them, "Are you so foolish? Don't you understand that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him?"

NLT Mark 7:18 "Don't you understand either?" he asked. "Can't you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you?"

ESV Mark 7:18 And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him,

NIV Mark 7:18 "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him 'unclean'?"

GNT Mark 7:18 κα λ γει α το ς, Ο τω ς κα με ς σ νετο στε; ο νοε τε τι π ν τ ξωθεν ε σ πορευ μενον ε ς τ ν νθρωπον ο δ ναιται α τ ν κοιν σαι

KJV Mark 7:18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him;

- Mk 4:13 Isa 28:9,10 Jer 5:4,5 Mt 15:16,17 16:11 Lu 24:25 Joh 3:10 1Co 3:2 Heb 5:11
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 4:13+ And He said to them, "Do you not understand this parable? How will you understand all the parables?

Matthew 15:16-17+ Jesus said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?

### DEFILEMENT IS "INSIDE OUT" NOT "OUTSIDE IN!"

**And He said to them, "Are you so lacking in understanding ([asunetos](#)) also?"** - Jesus answers their question by beginning with His own question in which He chides His "slow learners." Why are they so dull? Notice the pronoun **YOU**, which distinguishes the disciples from the Pharisees and the masses, neither of which had any understanding of the parable. So here we see Jesus "personalize" His preaching to His disciples.

**Wuest on "Are you so lacking in understanding also-** The idea is, "You also, as well as the multitude?" It was a cause of disappointment to Jesus that His own chosen pupils were still under the spell of the Pharasaic theological tradition and outlook. Gould says, "They had been trained in Judaism, in which the distinction between clean and unclean is ingrained, and could not understand a statement abrogating this." Expositors says: "The idea throughout is that ethical defilement is alone of importance, all other defilement, whether the subject of Mosaic ceremonial legislation or of scribe tradition, a trivial affair. Jesus here is a critic of Moses as well as the scribes, and introduces a religious revolution." ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

**Do you not understand ([noeo](#)) that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile([koinoo](#)) him** - Because this is such a radical idea, Jesus is reiterating this truth so they will truly comprehend what He is saying.

Jesus here is a critic of Moses as well as the scribes, and introduces a religious revolution.-- Expositors Commentary

**Lacking in understanding** ([801](#)) ([asunetos](#) from **a** = without + **sunetós** = sagacious, discerning) describes the man who is a fool, who cannot learn the lesson of experience, who will not use the mind and brain that God has given to him. This person is without insight or understanding and can be descriptive of an unredeemed man's heart. This man has an inability to bring together facts and make sense out of them. It is the one who lacks discernment. **Asunetos - 5v** - Matt. 15:16; Mk. 7:18; Rom. 1:21; Rom. 1:31; Rom. 10:19

**Understand** ([3539](#)) [noeo](#) from [nous](#) = mind, the seat of moral reflection) has the basic meaning of direct one's mind to something and thus means more than just take a glance at. It means to perceive with the mind, to apprehend, to ponder (= weigh in one's mind, think especially quietly, soberly and deeply). It means to consider well, to reflect on with insight, or to think over a matter carefully. The idea is to grasp or comprehend something on the basis of careful thought. **Noeo - 14v** - Matt. 15:17; Matt. 16:9; Matt. 16:11; Matt. 24:15; Mk. 7:18; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 13:14; Jn. 12:40; Rom. 1:20; Eph. 3:4; Eph. 3:20; 1 Tim. 1:7; 2 Tim. 2:7; Heb. 11:3

**Akin** summarizes Mark 7:18-20 - What follows (vs. 18-20) is one of the most critically important spiritual lessons in all of the Word of God. We must not miss it.

- Defilement (impurity) is not external but internal (Mark 7:15, 18).
- Defilement is not gastrointestinal but cardial (Mark 7:19).
- Defilement is not a matter of the stomach, it is a matter of the heart. (Mark 7:19)
- Defilement is not what goes in but what comes out (Mark 7:20).

Jesus' words are spiritually revolutionary! Religiously they are shocking. The real issues of religious and spiritual faith are internal not external. The focus is on the inside not the outside. Sin always proceeds, has its genesis from within. Food ends up in the stomach, but sin begins in the heart. Food is eaten, digested in the stomach and expelled (v. 19; lit. "Goes out into the drain or latrine"). Sin, however, remains in the heart, and then produces all manner of defilement and death. Basic problem: not what we do but who we are! 10 Real filth, impurity, defilement is inside and unseen, but it is there, and eventually it will show itself as vs. 21-23 make clear.

**Mark 7:19 because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach, and is eliminated?" (Thus He declared all foods clean.)**

Wuest because it does not enter his heart but his intestines, and goes out into that which is designed to receive it? (This He said) making all the foods clean. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET Mark 7:19 For it does not enter his heart but his stomach, and then goes out into the sewer." (This means all foods are clean.)

NLT Mark 7:19 Food doesn't go into your heart, but only passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer." (By saying this, he declared that every kind of food is acceptable in God's eyes.)

ESV Mark 7:19 since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)

NIV Mark 7:19 For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.")

GNT Mark 7:19 τι ο κ ε σ πο ρ ε ε τ αι α το ε ς τ ν καρ δ ι α ν λ λ ε ς τ ν κο ι λ ι α ν, κα ε ς τ ν φ ε ρ ν α κ πο ρ ε ε τ αι, καθ αρ ζ ω ν π ν τ α τ β ρ μα τ α;

KJV Mark 7:19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

- Mt 15:17 1Co 6:13 Col 2:20-23
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Acts 10:15+ Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

Matthew 15:11+ "It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."

Matthew 15:17+ "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?"

1 Corinthians 6:13+ Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

Colossians 2:20-23+ If (SINCE) you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. (SO WHAT IS OF VALUE AGAINST FLESHLY INDULGENCE? Read Col 3:1-4+ and then Col 3:5+ which speaks of fleshly indulgence!)

KOSHER FOR PASSOVER

### JESUS MAKES ALL "KOSHER" CLEAN!

**Kosher** describes foods are those that conform to the Jewish dietary regulations of kashrut (dietary law), primarily derived from Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Food that may be consumed according to halakha (law) is termed kosher in English, from the Ashkenazi pronunciation of the Hebrew term kashér , meaning "fit" (in this context, fit for consumption). Food that is not in accordance with law is called treif (Yiddish, derived from Hebrew: tráfáh) meaning "torn."

**Because** - Term of explanation. Pause and ponder before you read on asking what is Jesus explaining? Jesus explains why what a man eats does not defile him which directly counters the teaching of the legalistic Jews.

**It does not go into his heart** - **Heart** (see [kardia](#)) of course is not the physical organ in our chest but speaks of the essence of one's inner nature, one's "control center" so to speak. As an aside the "food" we want to go into our heart is the Word of God, pure

spiritual milk (1Pe 2:2+), solid food (Heb 5:14+), honey (Ps 19:10+). See Job's "secret" in suffering - Job 23:12+.

**THOUGHT** - How's your daily diet, not your literal, physical diet, but your spiritual diet? Are you feeling spiritually "anemic?" As a doctor one of the first questions I would ask a patient when they said they were fatigued all the time and used to have more energy is "How is your diet? Are you supplementing your diet with iron (if necessary)?" A simple lab test would often reveal anemia, one symptom (among others) of which is fatigue and weakness. Now apply this to your spiritual life. Are you able to stand strong when (not "if" but "when") the temptation comes? When the winds of adversity begin to blow (as they do in all our lives)? David knew trials like few men have ever known trials (King Saul sought to kill him for almost 10 years!) David learned the importance of daily intake of the Word of Life writing "As for God, His way is blameless; The WORD of the LORD is tried; He is a shield to all who take refuge in Him." (Ps 18:30+) Notice the parallel between Word and Shield. His Word (and His Spirit Who uses the Word) will enable us to stand firm against the temptation or adversity but even as we must daily eat to nourish our physical health, we must daily eat His Word for our spiritual health. So let me ask again "How is your "diet?" Jesus affirms the importance of a "good diet" declaring "'It is written, 'MAN SHALL NOT LIVE ON BREAD ALONE, BUT ON EVERY WORD THAT PROCEEDS OUT OF THE MOUTH OF GOD.'" (Mt 4:4+) And as Moses told the children of Israel preparing to go into the promised land (even as we daily prepare to go into the promised life in Christ) GOD'S WORD "is not an idle (EMPTY, VAIN, FUTILE, USELESS) **WORD** for you; indeed **IT is your life**. And by this **WORD** you will prolong your days in the land, which you are about to cross the Jordan to possess." (Dt 32:47+)

**But into his stomach, and is eliminated** ([ekporeuomai](#)) - **But** contrasts the two key "anatomical/theological" locations - the figurative heart (inner being) and the literal stomach. **Eliminated** is actually three words in Greek more literally reads "passes out ([ekporeuomai](#)) into (eis) the sewer (aphedron = toilet, latrine, sewer, privy - only here and Mt 15:17+)."

**(Thus He declared all foods clean)** - In this context, Jesus did not actually make this statement to His disciples. This is a parenthetical statement by Mark which looked forward to the time when under the New Covenant when all foods would be declared "**kosher**" (Acts 10:15+). In any event this statement is radical to a Jew who had been taught all his life he must eat "kosher." This teaching regarding kosher foods was so ingrained in the Jewish mind that even the apostle Peter would need an incredible demonstration from God to convince him that in Christ all foods are "kosher!" (Read Acts 10:10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 1-48+)

**Declared...clean** is [katharizo](#) (from **katharos** = pure, clean, without stain or spot; English words - catharsis = emotional or physical purging, cathartic = substance used to induce a purging, Cathar = member of a medieval sect which sought the purging of evil from its members) and means to make clean by taking away an undesirable part, cleansing from filth or impurity. Figuratively as used in this passage **katharizo** referred to cleansing from ritual contamination or impurity. Peter had to be taught this truth about **all foods clean** in Acts 10:15+ where "Again a voice came to him (PETER) a second time, '**What God has cleansed** ([katharizo](#)), **no longer consider unholy**.'" [Katharizo](#) was used of cleansing lepers from ceremonial uncleanness (see Mt 8:2-3+) (Related Resource: [Click](#) for more background on the Biblical concept of **clean** and **cleansing**.)

**Brian Bill**- This radical repurposing of the dietary laws took a long time for people to accept because they were so used to avoiding anything "unclean." Peter himself really wrestled with this, so much so that God gave him a vision of a bed sheet coming down from heaven filled with animals who were "unclean" in it. Peter was hungry and so God told him to "kill and eat" in Acts 10:13. Peter pushes back by saying he has never eaten anything unclean. A voice from heaven then says, "What God has made clean, do not call common." This happened three times, which shows how reluctant Peter was. Incidentally, there are some groups like Seventh Day Adventists that believe the Old Testament dietary dictums must still be followed. This is addressed in 1 Timothy 4:3-4 where we're told that in the later days some will: "require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving." These Old Testament dietary laws accomplished their function and have now been fulfilled in Christ. Thus, there is no need to avoid pork chops or lobster

[ESV Study Bible \(borrow\)](#) says "Mark notes that Jesus' teaching, in essence, declared all foods clean. The Mosaic ceremonial laws distinguished between "clean" and "unclean" foods (see Lev. 11:1-47). Their purpose was to instill an awareness of God's holiness and of the reality of sin as a barrier to fellowship with God. But once defilement of the heart is thoroughly removed and full fellowship with God becomes a reality (through the atoning death of Jesus; see Mark 10:45; Ro 14:14; Heb. 8:6-13; Heb 9:10, 14), the ceremonial laws have fulfilled their purpose and are no longer required."

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Mark 7:19 This He said, making all meats clean. (r.v.)

This is a remarkable rendering of the Revisers, which has the support of their profound scholarship; and inaugurates an era in the history of the Levitical institutions. Before this hour arrived men were clean if they ate certain kinds of food, and unclean if they ate

others. But from this moment, the Evangelist tells us, these outward distinctions were abolished. Henceforth all meats were to be viewed by the followers of Jesus as equally clean. There is, however, need that we should remember two or three things in respect to food. (1) That every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it can be received with thanksgiving. The act of thanksgiving is the test for the fitness and unfitness of food, as the ancient sign was supposed to be when made by the knight over a glass of wine offered by a stranger. Do not touch what you cannot thank God for.

(2) Take care to eat for the need of the body rather than for its pleasure.—There are a great many dainties and luxuries heaped on our tables which we take simply for the pleasure of eating. It is here that we are assailed with temptation, and need to be on our guard. The fact of food being pleasant eating is not in itself sufficient to justify our taking it. It may clog our digestion, and impair our power for thought and prayer and service.

(3) Be moderate in the amount you eat.—Quite as many over-eat as over-drink. We should always have the girded loin. The majority of the diseases of modern life have been traced to the habit of eating to excess. We are told by eminent authorities that we ought not to rise from table with the sense of having eaten to the full. Let your moderation in this also be known to all men. Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily

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**QUESTION - [What does the Bible say about what foods we should eat \(kosher\)? Are there foods a Christian should avoid? WATCH THE VIDEO](#)**

**ANSWER** - Leviticus chapter 11 lists the dietary restrictions God gave to the nation of Israel. The dietary laws included prohibitions against eating pork, shrimp, shellfish and many types of seafood, most insects, scavenger birds, and various other animals. The dietary rules were never intended to apply to anyone other than the Israelites. The purpose of the food laws was to make the Israelites distinct from all other nations. After this purpose had ended, Jesus declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19+). Later, God gave the apostle Peter a vision that implied formerly unclean animals could be eaten: "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:15+). When Jesus died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament law (Romans 10:4+; Galatians 3:24-26+; Ephesians 2:15+). This includes the laws regarding clean and unclean foods.

Romans 14:1-23+ teaches us that not everyone is mature enough in the faith to accept the fact that all foods are clean. As a result, if we are with someone who would be offended by our eating "unclean" food, we should give up our right to do so as to not offend the other person. We have the right to eat whatever we want, but we do not have the right to offend other people, even if they are wrong. For the Christian in this age, though, we have freedom to eat whatever we wish as long as it does not cause someone else to stumble in his/her faith.

In the New Covenant of grace, the Bible is far more concerned with how much we eat than what foods Christians eat. Physical appetites are an analogy of our ability to control ourselves. If we are unable to control our eating habits, we are probably also unable to control other habits such as those of the mind (lust, covetousness, unrighteous hatred/anger) and unable to keep our mouths from gossip or strife. As Christians, we are not to let our appetites control us; rather, we are to control them (Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 23:2; 2 Peter 1:5-7; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 2 Corinthians 10:5). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Related Resources from Gotquestions.org**

- [Why did the Old Testament Law command against the eating of pork?](#)
- [What does it mean to give glory to God whether you eat or drink \(1 Corinthians 10:31\)?](#)

**Mark 7:20 And He was saying, "That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man."**

Wuest And He was saying, That which is constantly proceeding out of the man, that thing defiles the man. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#) - used [by permission](#))

NET Mark 7:20 He said, "What comes out of a person defiles him.

NLT Mark 7:20 And then he added, "It is what comes from inside that defiles you.

ESV Mark 7:20 And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him.

NIV Mark 7:20 He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him 'unclean.'

GNT Mark 7:20 λεγεν δ τι το νθρ που κπορευ μενον, κε νο κοινο τ ν νθρωπον.

KJV Mark 7:20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man.



ASV Mark 7:20 And he said, That which proceedeth out of the man, that defileth the man.

CSB Mark 7:20 Then He said, "What comes out of a person-- that defiles him.

NKJ Mark 7:20 And He said, "What comes out of a man, that defiles a man.

- Mk 7:15 Ps 41:6 Heb 7:6 Mic 2:1 Mt 12:34-37 Jas 1:14,15 3:6 4:1
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE PROBLEM IS NOT EXTERNAL THE PROBLEM IS INTERNAL

**And He was saying** - (He was saying is found 10/22x in Mark = Mk. 4:9; Mk. 4:11; Mk. 4:21; Mk. 4:24; Mk. 4:26; Mk. 7:20; Mk. 7:27; Mk. 8:21; Mk. 12:38; Mk. 14:36) - Jesus having addressed the fact that food does not defile a man, now switches to moral issues that come out of a man.

**Spurgeon** - I want to indicate THE NEST FROM WHICH THEY COME. Now that we have seen these evil beasts (IN THE LIST BELOW), we will go and look at their den....There is not even need for you to stretch out your hand to feel for this foul nest of unclean birds, you can keep your hand upon your bosom, and it will not be far off from the lair wherein these evil things are lurking, ready to leap forth whenever occasion offers. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, "All these evil things come from within." "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts." The source from which these rivers of pollution proceed is the natural heart of man. Sin is not a splash of mud upon man's exterior, it is a filth generated within himself.

**That which proceeds** ([ekporeuomai](#)) **out of the man, that is what defiles** ([koinoo](#)) **the man** - Good teaching often uses repetition and Jesus was the Master Teacher, so for the again He emphasizes that it is not what comes into a man but what goes out of the man that defiles the man! **Proceeds** is in the [present tense](#) describing this evil as continually proceeding from within the man!

**Guzik** - God is far more concerned with what comes out of us than what goes into us.

**ILLUSTRATION - Rotten Within** - After a violent storm one night, a large tree, which over the years had become a stately giant, was found lying across the pathway in a park. Nothing but a splintered stump was left. Closer examination showed that it was **rotten** at the core because thousands of tiny insects had eaten away at its **heart**. The weakness of that tree was not brought on by the sudden storm --it began the very moment the first insect nested within its bark. With the Holy Spirit's help, let us be very careful to guard our purity (Pr 4:23+) and kill sin (and the temptation to sin) (Read Ro 8:13+).

**Mark 7:21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,**

Wuest For from within, out of the heart of men are constantly proceeding the depraved thoughts, fornications,

NET Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the human heart, come evil ideas, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly.

NLT Mark 7:21 For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.

ESV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

NIV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

GNT Mark 7:21 σωθεν γρ κ τς καρδς τν νθρωπων ο διαλογισμο ο κακο κπορευονται, πορνειαι, κλοπα, φνοι, 22 μοιχειαι, πλεονεξαι, πονηριαι, δλος, σλγεια, φθαλμς πονηρς, βλασφημια, περιηφαν, φροσνη.

KJV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

ASV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness:

CSB Mark 7:21 For from within, out of people's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immoralities, thefts, murders, 22 adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, promiscuity, stinginess, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness.

- **out of the heart of men:** Ge 6:5 8:21 Job 14:4 15:14-16 25:4 Ps 14:1,3 53:1,3 58:2,3 Pr 4:23 Jer 4:14 17:9 Mt 15:19 23:25-28 Lu 16:15 Ac 5:4 8:22 Ro 7:5,8 8:7,8 Ga 5:19-21 Tit 3:3 Jas 1:14,15 4:1-3 1Pe 4:2,3
- **evil:** Pr 15:25 Isa 59:7 Eze 38:10 Mt 9:4 Jas 2:4
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE HEART OF MAN'S PROBLEM IS THE PROBLEM OF HIS HEART!

**Spurgeon** on the heart - But what is meant here, do you think, by "**the heart**?" Is it not intended to indicate the man himself— the man's most real self? Sin is sin for the most part because it is of the **heart** and the will. If the man's heart had nothing to do with it, I do not see how it would be sin. If a man had no will in the matter, where would his responsibility be? It is because we willingly do evil that we sin. The essence of the sin lies in the will to do it, and the full consent of the **heart** therein. The **heart** is the center of life, the core of being, the place where manhood maintains its throne, and what a terrible statement this is, that out of the very center of life there proceeds from man "evil thoughts, wickedness, blasphemy," and the like! The **heart** is the spring of action, the **heart** suggests, resolves, designs and sets the whole train of life in motion, the **heart** gives the impulse and the force, and yet out of the **heart** thus initiating and working proceeds all this mischief of sin. By the **heart** is meant mainly the affections, but it often includes the understanding and the will, it is, in fact, the man's vital self. Sin is not ab extra that comes to us and afflicts us like robbers, breaking into our house at night, but it is a tenant of the soul, dwelling within us as in its own house. This evil worm has penetrated into the kernel of our being, and there it abides. Sin has intertwined itself with the warp and woof of our nature, and none can remove it but the Lord God Himself. As long as the heart remains unchanged, out of it will proceed that which is sinful. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." If it is so, that the nest in which sin is born and nurtured is the heart itself, we always carry about with us by nature that which will surely be the cause of sin unless we look well to it, and cry daily for grace to conquer it. This evil nature of ours is an always present danger; it is a powder magazine which at any moment may explode. **Oh for grace (ED: AND THE SPIRIT OF GRACE) to keep our hearts with all diligence!** (Proverbs 4:23+)

**For from within, out of the heart of men-** Defilement is an "inside job" so to speak! The root problem of all men's sin is their wicked, depraved, spiritually uncircumcised heart! The heart is like a "root" and the sin is the "fruit" of that corrupt "root" and it is an ugly, despicable and destructive crop to behold! Jesus proceeds to list 13 sins (not all inclusive of course) to drive home the truth that all defilement originates from our defiled heart.

**Spurgeon** calls this list a "**swarm of sins**" adding "I seem to have broken open a wasp's nest, and the stinging creatures fly out, in number numberless! Here are thirteen words, each one of them teeming with all manner of evils. Matthew, when he condenses the Savior's utterances, mentions seven of these horrible things, one of which is omitted here, but Mark is fuller in this instance, and mentions thirteen items of abomination. I am struck with the legion of foul spirits which are here set free, as if the door of the bottomless pit had been opened. As armies of locusts, or as swarms of the flies of Egypt, so are sins. As the wilderness was full of fiery serpents and scorpions, so is this world full of iniquities. The very names of them are a pain to the ear. Let us bow our heads in sorrow as we read the muster-roll of this legion of terror, "Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, thefts, murders, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Now, notice first, that this awful catalog, this horrible list of the unclean birds that find a cage within the human heart, begins with things that are lightly regarded among men—"evil thoughts." "We shall not be hanged for our thoughts," cries one. I wish that such idle talkers would remember that they will be damned for their thoughts, and that instead of evil thoughts being less sinful than evil acts, it may sometimes happen that in the thought the man may be worse than in the deed. He may not be able to carry out all the mischief that lurks within his designs, and yet in forming the design he may incur all the guilt. **Thoughts are the eggs of words and actions, and within the thoughts lie compacted and condensed all the villainy of actual transgressions. If men did but more carefully watch their thoughts, they would not so readily fall into evil habits, but men first indulge the thought of evil, and then the imagination of evil, nor does the process stay there. Picturing it before their mind's eye, they excite their own desires after it; these grow into a thirst and kindle into a passion. Then the deed is speedily forthcoming, it was long in the hatching, but in a moment it comes forth to curse a whole lifetime.** Instead of fancying that evil thoughts are mere trifles, let us regard them as the root of bitterness, the still in which the poisonous spirit is manufactured. Our Savior here puts evil thoughts first in the catalog of evil things, and He knew well their true nature. If we would be lost we have only to indulge these, if we would be saved we must conquer these. Let us make a conscience of our thoughts, he that does not so will not long make a conscience of his words or deeds. Let us pray God to purge us in the inward parts, lest perhaps, by entertaining vain thoughts as lodgers within our hearts, they take up their residence, become masters of our lives, and drive us onward to the outward sins which shall utterly pollute and defile us in the eyes of our fellow men. Since this indictment begins with evil thoughts, who among us can plead guiltless? Since evil thoughts are the first of

sins, we had better meet the charge with immediate repentance and an instant faith in the only Savior. These thoughts come into our minds in the house of God, they intrude into our prayers, they defile our psalms, and they disturb our meditations. Is there a sacred hill so high; is there a quiet valley so deep, that therein we may be quite clear from these "evil thoughts"? Who can deliver us from this plague but the Lord our God? We need to humble ourselves at the first reading of this list, and cry unto the Lord for mercy. Carefully notice the range which this catalog takes. It is a very singular one, for it begins with thoughts, and then it runs on until it lands us in utter want of thought, or foolishness.

We see this eruption of internal evil almost immediately after sin entered the world, Moses recording "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually**". (Ge 6:5)

As [Spurgeon](#) said "The source from which these rivers of pollution proceed is the natural heart of man. Sin is not a splash of mud upon man's exterior, it is a filth generated within himself....I sicken as I think how man has plagued his fellow-men by his sins. But I will not go through the list, nor need I: the devil has preached upon this text this week, and few have been able to escape the horrible exposition. A foul exhalation has entered into every house in this great city, polluting the very atmosphere, and spreading moral infection. Oh for a hurricane to sweep away the pestilent vapor! Within a narrow space a multitude of iniquities have gathered like vultures upon a mass of carrion. What a collection of sins may meet in a single story! How soon does one transgression call to its fellows, till "a little one has become a thousand and a small one a strong nation!" Alas, alas for the multitudes of sins!"

**Proceed** ([ekporeuomai](#)) - Jesus begins this list of 13 sins (which are hardly exhaustive!)

**The evil thoughts** - **Evil thoughts** are like a spring that is "contaminated" at the fountainhead, for it is from the bad thinking which come bad actions which are described in this "vice list." **Evil thoughts** is not merely evil thoughts but evil devisings which issue in degraded acts and vices now mentioned. As discussed below these **thoughts** are not just random ideas that come into one's mind but reflect the fallen, fleshly, sinful mind reasoning carefully and thoroughly! So it is no surprise that the verb proceed is in the present tense, depicting our depraved mind and continually "calculating" how to carry out evil deeds! You can mark it down, that evil is not just "out there" (in the world), but is "in here" (in our heart) which contains a veritable cesspool of sin that literally "gushes out" of us, including believers unless "by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body!" (Ro 8:13+) As **J.C. Ryle** said "We have within us the beginning of every sin under heaven."

"**Ill-thinking** is put first, and **unthinking** is put last."

---Matthew Henry

[Brian Bill](#) asks "Do our problems originate outside of us, or within us? To frame it theologically, are humans basically good or basically evil? Let's do a little survey. How many of you think people are generally good? How many of you would say that people are inherently evil? I started keeping track of different news headlines from just this week and then I stopped because it was way too depressing – an 18-year-old from Germany murdered 9 and especially targeted children, a stabbing in Japan killed 19, there was an attack in Somalia and a Catholic priest had his throat slit by ISIS during a mass in France and another policeman was murdered. Where does all this come from? The comic strip character Pogo once said, "We have met the enemy and he is us." G.K. Chesterton was once asked to answer this question in a newspaper article: "What's wrong with the world?" Here's the answer he submitted: "Dear Sirs, I am." If you think that humans are basically good, ponder these two verses. Genesis 6:5: "The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." James 4:1: "What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you?" I've been thinking about this quote from Ralph Waldo Emerson all week: "Sow a thought and you reap an action; sow an act and you reap a habit; sow a habit and you reap a character; sow a character and you reap a destiny." What begins in our minds comes out in our attitudes and actions. Decadent desires are often fleshed out in dark deeds.

**THOUGHT** - Proverbs 23:7 says "as he thinks in his heart, so is he." Thank God for the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Mk 1:1+) by which the Spirit makes us a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17+), gives us a new heart (Ezek 36:26+) and a new mind (1 Cor 2:17), so that in the supernatural power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are enabled to walk in a new way, worthy of the Lord (Col 1:10+)!

**Evil** (bad, harm) ([2556](#))([kakos](#) related word = [kakia](#)) is a word which basically denotes a lack of something so that it is "bad" or "not as it ought to be. The very sound of the word as it is pronounced, suggests the idea in the word "reprehensible!" **Kakos** means not meeting accepted standards of behavior, and thus worthless, bad or inferior. **Kakos** then speaks of lack of goodness, of a bad nature. One of the more frightening uses of **kakos** (personal opinion) is in the phrase "inventors of evil" (Ro 1:30). **Kakos** stands for "whatever is evil in character, base," **Kakos** is antithetic to [kalos](#), "fair, advisable, good in character," and to [agathos](#), "beneficial, useful, good in act;" hence **kakos** denotes what is useless, incapable, bad.

**Thoughts** ([1261](#))([dialogismos](#) from [diá](#) = through or as a preposition to intensify meaning of + [logizomai](#) =

reckon, take an inventory, conclude; Eng = *dialogue*) means literally reasoning through and so to think or reason with thoroughness and completeness, think out carefully, reason thoroughly, consider carefully, weighing. In the Greek writings dialogismos described the thinking of a man deliberating with himself. It refers to calculated consideration (good or bad as discussed below). It pictures one deliberating with one's self which conveys the basic meaning of inner reasoning.

**Fornications** (**porneia**) from root verb **pernao** = to sell, **porneuo** = to play the harlot; **pornos** = male prostitute; Eng - pornography) originally referred to any excessive behavior or lack of restraint, but eventually became associated with sexual excess and indulgence, of every kind of extramarital, unlawful, or unnatural sexual intercourse. It refers to general sexual acts outside of legal marriage. Sex was often linked to pagan religious practice, with the idolatrous worship of false gods (TDNT) Loose morals were a continuous problem in the Greco-Roman world.

**Thefts** (2829) (**klope** from **klepto** = to steal; Eng - **kleptomaniac**) is straightforward and means theft or stealing. **Liddell-Scott** adds "I. theft, Lat. furtum, Aesch., Eur. II. a secret act, fraud, Eur., Aeschin.; klope| by stealth or fraud, Soph.; *podoin klopā aresthai*, i.e. to steal away, Id. III. the surprise of a military post, Xen. 4x in the Septuagint - Gen. 40:15; Prov. 9:17; Jer. 48:27; Hos. 4:2; and twice in the NT = Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21. Barclay adds that "In Greek, there are two words for a robber—kleptēs and lēstēs. Lēstēs is a brigand; Barabbas was a lēstēs (John 18:40), and a brigand may be a very brave man although an outlaw. Kleptēs is a thief; Judas was a kleptēs when he pilfered from the box (John 12:6). A kleptēs is a mean, deceitful, dishonourable pilferer, without even the redeeming quality of a certain audacious gallantry that a brigand must have."

**Spurgeon** on **thefts** - Thefts in all their shapes are also injurious to the commonwealth. By this we mean not only robberies, but all taking from others unjustly, such as the oppression of the poor in their wages, the taking of undue advantage in trading, the incurring of debts without hope of being able to pay, and the like—these are varied forms of dishonesty, and are full of injury to others

**Murders** (5408) (**phonos**) is a noun describing killing, murder, slaughter, in classical Greek referring to the literal killing of someone. Depriving one of life by illegal or intentional act. Those reject the knowledge of God, He gives over to a depraved mind which includes those "filled with...murder" (Ro 1:29). Jesus described Saul's heart declaring "out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders." (Mt 15:19, Mk 7:21) **Phonos** describes Barabbas the murderer Pilate released instead of Jesus (Lk 23:19, 25+). In the future pouring out of God's wrath in the Tribulation, even after the horrible plagues the earth dwellers "did not repent of their murders." (Rev 9:21). Murder is in direct opposition to the Sixth Commandment which is still valid. (Ex. 20:13; Deut 5:17).

**Spurgeon** on **murders** - Actual murders follow frequently upon unbridled passion, but forget not that the command, "You shall not kill," may be broken by anger, hate, malice, and the desire for revenge. Many a murderer in heart may be among us this day, being angry at his brother without a cause. He that conceives and hides malice in his soul is a murderer before God. This form of evil breeds all manner of harm to society.

**Adulteries** (3430) (**moicheia** from **moicheuo** = commit adultery) describes an act of sexual intercourse with someone not one's own spouse. **Moicheia** is a subclass of **porneia**, which includes all sexual sins. **Moicheia** involves at least one person who is married. 3x - Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21; Jn. 8:3. Three times in the Septuagint - Jer. 13:27; Hos. 2:2; Hos. 4:2. Gilbrant adds that "In the ancient world marital fidelity was expected of the wife only. Acts of adultery between an unmarried man and a married woman or between two married individuals, however, were not tolerated. Yet, a married man's visit to a prostitute was not regarded as adultery. Thus the ancient world endorsed a double standard for determining adultery. This is radically different from the Biblical attitude where adultery is seen as a violation of the original, divinely instituted marriage bond (Genesis 2:23f.; Exodus 20:14). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary) In sum **adultery** is "violating the marriage covenant by engaging in sexual behavior mentally (Mt 5:28) or physically with someone you are not married to. The 7th commandment (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18)" (Akin)

Jesus declared "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28) Notice where the adultery is committed? In the heart, which in the present passage is the source of all evil thoughts! So we are not surprised with this heinous sin takes root in one's heart it brings forth a rotten crop of sexual perversion, child pornography, incest, infidelity, and the lurid list goes on. Oh, thank God for the liberating, empowering Gospel of God!!!

**Mark 7:22 deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness.**

Wuest thefts, murders, adulteries, perniciousness, deceit, wantonness, a malicious, mischief-working eye, malicious misrepresentation, pride, folly.

NET Mark 7:22 adultery, greed, evil, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, and folly.

NLT Mark 7:22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lustful desires, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness.

ESV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness.

NIV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, 22 greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly.

GNT Mark 7:22 μοιχε αι, πλεονεξ αι, πονηρ αι, ὁ λος, σ λγεια, φθαλμ ς πονηρ ς, βλασφημ α, περηφαν α, φροσ νη·

KJV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

ASV Mark 7:21 For from within, out of the heart of men, evil thoughts proceed, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, 22 covetings, wickednesses, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, railing, pride, foolishness:

CSB Mark 7:22 adulteries, greed, evil actions, deceit, promiscuity, stinginess, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness.

NKJ Mark 7:21 "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 "thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.

- **evil:** De 15:9 28:54,56 1Sa 18:8,9 Pr 23:6 28:22 Mt 20:15
- **pride:** 2Ch 32:25,26,31 Ps 10:4 Ob 1:3,4 2Co 10:5 1Pe 5:5
- **foolishness:** Pr 12:23 22:15 24:9 27:22 Ec 7:25 1Pe 2:15
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE SWARM OF SINS CONTINUES

It is notable that the first seven sins in this list are all in the plural (wickedness in Greek is plural). Regarding the plural [Spurgeon](#) expound they are in plural "for in any one sin there lurks a multitude of sins. One crime is built up of many; in any one form of sin there is a tangle and conglomerate of many evils. There are myriads of evil thoughts. In the crime of uncleanness there are stages, the thought, the word, the deed, all these are varieties of the same species, but they are all sins, and they are each one worthy of the generic name, though they do not take the same form. If the varieties of each sin are so many, and if all sins must be spoken of as a plurality under each variety, how innumerable must be the sins of men! O Lord, You alone know our iniquities! Who could set them in order before us but Your own omniscient self? What must they appear to Your perfect vision! Brethren, if we were once to see sin in its true colors, and were then to see it in its innumerable hosts, we would sink into despair if any sort of conscience remained in us."

**Deeds of coveting** means "to desire numerically more" and is the root of many other sins. It's often caused by greed and self-centeredness and refers to an insatiable craving for that which belongs to someone else.

**Deeds of coveting** (4124)([pleonexia](#) from [pleon](#) = more + [écho](#) = have) means literally to have more and describes a strong desire to acquire more and more material possessions, especially that which is forbidden. It is a desire to have more irrespective of one's need and is always used in bad sense. It describes an insatiable selfishness. Even a pagan like **Plato** had the sense to recognize "The desire of man is like a sieve or a pierced vessel which he ever tries to, and can never fill." **Louw-Nida** says **pleonexia** is "a strong desire to acquire more and more material possessions or to possess more things than other people have, all irrespective of need." The only other mention in the Gospels is Lk 12:15. **Deeds of coveting** is synonymous with greed, a desire for more at the expense or exploitation of another and represents a violation of the 10th commandment (Ex. 20:17; Deut 5:21).

**Barclay on pleonexia** - It has been defined as the accursed love of having. It has been defined as 'the spirit which snatches at that which it is not right to take', 'the baneful appetite for that which belongs to others'. It is the spirit which snatches at things, not to hoard them like a miser, but to spend them in lust and luxury. It has been defined as 'Rapacious appetite for gain, not for its own sake, but for the pleasure of refunding it immediately through all the channels of pride and luxury.' It is not the desire for money and things; it includes the desire for power, the insatiable lust of the flesh. Plato said, 'The desire of man is like a sieve or pierced vessel which he ever tries to, and can never fill.' Pleonexia is that lust for having which is in the heart of the person who sees happiness in



things instead of in God.

**Spurgeon - Covetousness**—the greed to get, and the greed to keep, the adding field to field until the man seems eager to be left alone on the earth; the grasping of excessive riches, and the creation of poverty in others by crushing their humbler enterprises, all this is evil, though some applaud it as business sharpness.

**Wickedness** is deliberate meanness! We have all met people who wear this sin almost as their "badge of honor!"

**Wickedness** (4189) (**poneria** from **poneros** from **pónos** = labor, sorrow, pain and **poneo** = to be involved in work, labor) refers to depravity, to an evil disposition, to badness or to an evil nature. **Poneria** is used in the NT only in the moral and ethical sense and refers to intentionally practiced ill will. **Poneria** describes the state of lacking moral or social values (baseness, sinfulness, maliciousness, malevolence). **Poneria** is active malice. **Poneria** is malevolence, not only doing evil, but being evil. Webster defines malevolence as the condition which arises from intense often vicious ill will, spite, or hatred.

**Wuest** on **poneria** - "Wickedness" is ponēria, "depravity, iniquity." The word speaks of wickedness, not merely in the abstract, but **active**. It has in it, the ideas of "dangerous, destructive." Our word "pernicious" excellently describes it. The word **kakos** speaks of wickedness in the abstract. **Ponēros** speaks of wickedness in **active opposition** to the good. The **kakos** man is content to perish in his own corruption. The **ponēros** man is not content unless he pulls everyone else down with him into his own destruction.

**Barclay** on root word **poneros** - The person who is ponēros is the one in whose heart there is the desire to harm. That person is, as the eighteenth-century German theologian Johann Bengel said, 'trained in every crime and completely equipped to inflict evil on any man'. In the seventeenth century, Jeremy Taylor defined this ponēria as 'aptness to do shrewd turns, to delight in mischiefs and tragedies; loving to trouble our neighbour, and to do him ill offices; crossness, perverseness and peevishness of action in our intercourse'. Ponēria not only corrupts the person who has it; it corrupts others too. Ponēros—the evil one—is the title of Satan. The worst people of all, those who are doing Satan's work, are those who, being bad themselves, make others as bad as they are.

**Deceit** was used for trapping an animal using deception, and many people have become very skilled at "trapping" other people through their deceptive words and actions!

**Deceit** (1388) (**dolos** which is derived from **dello** meaning to bait) literally refers to a fishhook, trap, or trick all of which are various forms of deception. **Dolos** is a deliberate attempt to mislead, trick, snare or "bait" (baiting the trap in attempt to "catch" the unwary victim) other people by telling lies. It is a desire to gain advantage or preserve position by deceiving others. A modern term in advertising is called "bait and switch" where the unwary consumer is lured in by what looks like a price too good to be true!

**Barclay** on **dolos** - It is used for instance of a mousetrap. When the Greeks were besieging Troy and could not gain entry, they sent the Trojans the present of a great wooden horse, as if it was a token of goodwill. The Trojans opened their gates and took it in. But the horse was filled with Greeks who in the night broke out and dealt death and devastation to Troy. That exactly is **dolos**. It is crafty, cunning, deceitful, clever treachery.

**Sensuality** means one has no moral restraints, and is tragically a good description of much of the American culture today, especially the entertainment culture. I am 74 and remember when a curse word would get a television showed censored. I don't even hear the word "censor" any more, unless it is to censor Christians from their "hate speech" in which they simply quote God's Word regarding certain perverted sexual practices! It is becoming very difficult to find a television show or movie that is not replete with godless, foul language. Now almost everything NETFLIX produces is "MA" or for "mature audiences," and reflects blatant, in your face sinful words and behavior. America's moral compass is broke! Revive us according to Thy Word (Ps 119:25).

**Sensuality** (766) (**aselgeia** from **aselges** = licentious <> **a** = negates next word + **selges** = continent) originally referred to any excess or lack of restraint but came to convey the idea of shameless excess and the absence of restraint, especially with sexual excess. It is unrestrained, unbridled, shameless living. Thus like **koite**, **aselgeia** was used almost exclusively of especially lewd sexual immorality, of uninhibited and unabashed lasciviousness. It refers to the kind of sexual debauchery and abandonment that characterizes much of modern society and that is often flaunted almost as a badge of distinction! **Aselgeia** refers to uninhibited sexual indulgence without shame and without concern for what others think or how they may be affected (or infected). The Greeks defined **aselgeia** as "a disposition of soul that resents all discipline," as "a spirit that acknowledges no restraints, dares whatsoever its caprice and wanton insolence may suggest."

**Barclay** - The Greeks defined **aselgeia** as 'a disposition of soul that resents all discipline', as 'a spirit that acknowledges no restraints, dares whatsoever its caprice and wanton insolence may suggest'. The great characteristic of people who are guilty of **aselgeia** is that they are lost to decency and to shame. Evil men and women may hide their sin, but those who have **aselgeia** sin without a qualm and never hesitate to shock other



people. Jezebel was the classic instance of aselgeia when she built a pagan shrine in Jerusalem the holy city.

**Spurgeon** - God keep us from ever navigating the dangerous sea of iniquity where currents run one way, and undercurrents another, and where oftentimes **sensual desires** develop into whirlpools of abominable passions, which suck men down into the depths of infamy and perdition!

**Mattoon** - This was the ugliest word in the Greek language. It indicates an absence of restraint, shamelessness, an 'I Don't Care What Others Think' attitude, unbridled lust, sensual dress and behavior, or a parading of perversion."

**MacArthur** - **Aselgeia** (sensuality) refers to total licentiousness, the absence of all moral restraint, especially in the area of sexual sins. One commentator says the term relates to "a disposition of the soul incapable of bearing the pain of discipline." The idea is that of unbridled self-indulgence and undisciplined obscenity... All people initially recognize at least some standard of right and wrong and have a certain sense of shame when they act against that standard. Consequently, they usually try to hide their wrongdoing. They may continually fall back into it but still recognize it as wrong, as something they should not be doing; and conscience will not let them remain comfortable. But as they continue to overrule conscience and train themselves to do evil and to ignore guilt, they eventually reject those standards and determine to live solely by their own desires, thereby revealing an already seared conscience. Having rejected all divine guidelines and protection, they become depraved in mind and give themselves over to sensuality. Such a person cares nothing about what other people think—not to mention about what God thinks—but only about what gratifies the cravings of his own warped mind. ([Ephesians. Chicago: Moody Press](#))

Is it not fascinating the sin of **envy** includes the Greek word **ophthalmos** which means **eye**! Oh what trouble our eyes cause for us when we look at other people's lives and their "things!" The Greek text for "envy" is literally "evil eye," and so is actually two words, **ophthalmos** and **poneros**, the latter meaning evil, even active evil.

**Akin** on **envy** - – lit. "An evil eye," figure of speech for stinginess, jealousy, rooted in unbelief. It believes God is withholding His best from you. A heart ailment that has the seeds of its own destruction sown within. It is never satisfied! It always wants more.

**Envy** (literally "an evil eye" = **poneros** + **ophthalmos**). Vincent defines it as "a malicious, mischief-working eye," with the meaning of positive, injurious activity. **Ophthalmos** most often describes literal eyes which give sight, but occasionally is used figuratively to describe the eyes as the source of spiritual sight (or lack thereof). **Thayer** says ophthalmos refers to "the eyes of the mind, the faculty of knowing." Swete says it is a Semitic expression for stinginess, envy, jealousy, a jealous grudge. **Barclay** - **Envy** is literally the evil eye, the eye that looks on the success and happiness of another in such a way that it would cast an evil spell upon it if it could.

**Slander** could be against God or man.

**Spurgeon** on "an evil eye" - What can it mean? May the very use of the eye become a sin worthy to be ranked with theft and murder? Yes, when that evil eye means envy, it proceeds to a high degree of wickedness and borders upon the worst of wrongs. When we look upon another man and regard him with malignity, when his prosperity makes us grieve, when in his very sorrows we take an inhuman delight, and gloat over his misery, his sin, his degradation, we then sin most heinously, and are prepared for any horror. This sin of envy, and that other of blasphemy, would appear to be a wanton superfluity of evil, ministering no appearance of benefit to men. Some sins have a winning witchery with them, but there are old hags of sins which ought to attract no man in his senses, and yet they hold men enslaved. Among these sins I rank envy, blasphemy, and pride.

**Slander** (988) (**blasphemia** from **blapto** = injure, hurt + **pheme** = report, rumor, fame from **phemí** = to speak; cf **blasphemeo**) refers to verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander. It is speech which seeks to wound someone's reputation by evil reports, evil speaking. Abusive speech against someone by telling lies or otherwise offending them. In Classical Greek **blasphemia/blasphemeo** represented the strongest expression of personal defamation. **Blasphemia** means literally **to speak to harm** and in general therefore means to bring into ill repute and so to slander, **todefame**. "The word does not necessarily speak of blasphemy against God. It is used of reviling, calumny, evil-speaking in general, malicious misrepresentation."

**Vincent** says pride "Is the sin of an uplifted heart against God and man."

**Spurgeon** comments that **pride** "reads like a grim sarcasm, that sinners should be proud. What have such creatures to be proud of? What! Adulteries, murders, thefts, and yet pride? One would have said that such sins would have forbidden pride. What a misalliance! A being infamous, and yet puffed up. Alas! The worse a man becomes the more is he filled with a sort of vainglory, by the force of which he justifies his own iniquities, and refuses to see his own vileness. This enables men to set darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter. What an assemblage of banditti of every nationality range themselves under the banner of evil! Lord, save us from them!

**Pride** (5243) (**huperephania** from **huperephanos** from **huper** = over, above, + **phaíno** = shine) describes a haughty person with his head held high above others. This describes the feeling of personal superiority, which regards others with haughtiness. It is

contemptuousness, a state of ostentatious pride or arrogance bordering on insolence. Disdain, contempt towards or for another. This is a puffed up attitude that has a high opinion of self, and regards others with contempt. Only use in the NT. **BDAG** says it is "a state of undue sense of one's importance bordering on insolence." **Friberg** says it is "as a conscious effort to appear conspicuously above others." Thayer says it is "the characteristic of one who, with a swollen estimate of his own powers or merits, looks down on others and even treats them with insolence and contempt." **Barclay** "It does not so much mean the man who is conspicuous and someone to whom others look up; instead it refers to the man who stands on his own little self-created pedestal and looks down" (New Testament Words, p.134). Used over 50x in Septuagint - Exod. 18:21; Lev. 26:19; Num. 15:30; Deut. 17:12; Est. 4:17; Est. 8:12; Ps. 17:10; Ps. 31:18; Ps. 31:23; Ps. 36:11; Ps. 59:12; Ps. 73:6; Ps. 74:3; Ps. 74:23; Ps. 101:7; Prov. 8:13; Isa. 16:6; Jer. 48:29; Ezek. 7:20; Ezek. 16:49; Ezek. 16:56; Dan. 4:22; Dan. 4:37; Amos 8:7; Obad. 1:3

**Barclay** - It describes the attitude of people 'who have a certain contempt for everyone except themselves'. The interesting thing about this word, as the Greeks used it, is that it describes an attitude that may never become public. It may be that in their heart of hearts these people are always secretly comparing themselves with others. They might even ape humility and yet in their hearts be proud. Sometimes, of course, the pride is evident. The Greeks had a legend of this pride. They said that the Giants, the sons of Tartarus and Gē, in their pride sought to storm heaven and were cast down by Hercules. That is *hyperēphania*. It is setting oneself up against God; it is 'invading God's prerogatives'. That is why it has been called 'the peak of all the vices', and why 'God opposes the proud' (James 4:6).

**Spurgeon** - Rising in evil thought, sin flows through a black country full of varying immoralities, until it falls into the Dead Sea of "foolishness." How often have I heard it said of a vicious life, when it has ripened into horror, "The man must have been mad! He was not only wicked, but what a **fool** he must have been! The devil himself seems to have forsaken him. He acted craftily enough at one time, but afterwards he went against his own interests, and insured his own destruction." Yes, men begin with the thought that they know better than their Maker, and at last they reach utter thoughtlessness, stolidity of conscience, and stupidity of mind. In the end they refuse to think at all, and nothing can save them from reckless defiance of common prudence. They are given over to judicial senselessness. Though God Himself should speak, they have no ears for Him; their sin has brought on them the punishment of utter hardness of heart. They have made themselves to be as the adder, which will not hear the voice of the charmer, charm he ever so wisely. This is the way of sin—to begin with fancied wisdom, and end with foolishness. The man who thought himself more than a man, at last ends as a brute beast devoid of reason. What a range, my brethren, there is between these two points! Read the words again, and see what a terrible zigzag path lies between wrong thought and no thought at all.

**Foolishness** (877)(**aphrosune** from **aphron** = unwise from **a** = negate + **phren** - thinking mind) means morally or intellectually, not using one's ability to understand. Lack of sense. **BDAG** = "the state of lack of prudence or good judgment, foolishness, lack of sense, moral and intellectual." **Gilbrant** - "In classical Greek this involved both a lack of mental prowess and an absence of common sense, a distorted mental perception." "This does not mean the foolishness that is due to weakness of intellect and lack of brains; it means moral folly. It describes not those who are brainless fools, but those who choose to play the fool." (Barclay) Used 4x - Mk. 7:22; 2 Co. 11:1; 2 Co. 11:17; 2 Co. 11:21. Over 30x in the Septuagint - Deut. 22:21; Jdg. 19:23; Jdg. 19:24; Jdg. 20:6; Jdg. 20:10; 1 Sam. 25:25; 2 Sam. 13:12; Job 1:22; Job 4:6; Ps. 38:5; Ps. 69:5; Prov. 5:5; Prov. 5:23; Prov. 9:6; Prov. 18:2; Prov. 18:13; Prov. 19:3; Prov. 26:4; Prov. 26:5; Prov. 27:22; Eccl. 2:3; Eccl. 2:12; Eccl. 2:13; Eccl. 7:25; Eccl. 9:17; Eccl. 10:1; Eccl. 10:3; Eccl. 10:13; Lam. 2:14;

**Zodhiates** on **aphrosune** - In Mark 7:21, 22, *aphrosúnē* appears as the last in the list of vices, probably indicating that it is basic to the other sins mentioned, mainly evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride. The final sin is *aphrosúnē*, as if to say that all of these are the result of not being able to think properly and arrive at adequate conclusions. However, verse twenty-one establishes *aphrosúnē*, foolishness or the inability to think properly according to God's intended gift of mind, as caused by the heart, "from within, out of the heart of men." The mind becomes corrupt, unable to think properly when the heart is sinful and unregenerate. It can only function according to God's intent and purpose as the heart becomes purified by Him, for as the Lord said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). The mind sees nothing correctly if the heart is not pure. (Complete Word Study Dictionary – New Testament)

"Madness by nature reigns within,  
The passions burn and rage;  
Till God's own Son, with skill divine,  
The inward fire assuage."

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**D L Moody** - FEBRUARY 4th From within, out the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness.—Mark 7:21, 22.

IF a man should advertise that he could take a correct photograph of people's hearts, do you believe he would find any customers? There is not a man among us whom you could hire to have his photograph taken, if you could photograph the real man. We go to have our faces taken, and carefully arrange our toilet, and if the artist flatters us, we say, "Oh, yes, that's a first-rate likeness," and we pass it around among our friends. But let the real man be brought out, the photograph of the heart, and see if we will pass that around among our neighbors! Why, we would not want our own wives to see it! We would be frightened even to look at it ourselves.

### Mark 7:23 "All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man."

Wuest All these pernicious things from within are constantly proceeding and are constantly defiling the man.

NET Mark 7:23 All these evils come from within and defile a person."

NLT Mark 7:23 All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you."

ESV Mark 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

NIV Mark 7:23 All these evils come from inside and make a man 'unclean.'"

GNT Mark 7:23 π ν τ α τ α τ π ο ν η ρ σ ω θ ε ν κ π ο ρ ε ε τ α ι κ α κ ο ι ν ο τ ν ν θ ρ ω π ο ν .

KJV Mark 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

ASV Mark 7:23 all these evil things proceed from within, and defile the man.

CSB Mark 7:23 All these evil things come from within and defile a person."

NKJ Mark 7:23 "All these evil things come from within and defile a man."

NRS Mark 7:23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

YLT Mark 7:23 all these evils do come forth from within, and they defile the man.'

- **defile:** Mk 7:15,18 1Co 3:17 Tit 1:15 Jude 1:8
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SUMMARY OF DEFILEMENT

### Related Passage:

Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Romans 1:28+ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

Ps 24:3+ Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has **clean hands** and a **pure heart**, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.

**All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man**- Our problem is not our environmental influences but our internal, infernal evil that is present in our hearts (Ro 5:12+). Ceremonially clean hands combined with a defiled heart will take a man to Hell because this heart still pours forth evil things and needs a "heart transplant" which is another way of describing entering the New Covenant by grace through faith in Christ (Eph 2:8-9+) and was described by the prophet Ezekiel...

Ezekiel 36:26-27+ "Moreover, I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

**Proceed from** (1607) see above on [ekporeuomai](#)

**Defile** (2840) see above on [koinoo](#)

**Spurgeon** on **defile the man** - sin always causes defilement to the man himself. He goes from bad to worse, from worse to worst. Sin is like a ladder. Few reach the height of iniquity at once, the most of men climb from one evil to another, and then to a third and a fourth. Sin hardens men to further sin. He who is a moral monster was not always such. By sinning much he learned to sin more. The door of his heart was at first a little ajar, but outgoing sin opened it to its full width. A man is not capable at first of the sins which afterwards are habitual to him. Step by step men descend into the abyss of infamy if their feet are not hindered by restraint, or

stopped by almighty grace. Every sin produces a fresh degree of callousness in the heart. Even if sin is speedily repented of, its damage is not readily repaired, if its writing is erased you can see where it used to be. Even the passage of a momentary thought over the mind will leave a stain. See, then, the defiling power of sin.

**Brian Bill** - Every one is capable of every sin on the list the Lord just laid out. There is no heart where sin does not lurk. Romans 3:10-12+, Ro 3:23+: "None is righteous, no not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."...When confronted with his sinfulness and the horrors of his unholy heart, David prayed this in Psalm 51:9-10+: "Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Fellow sinner, your heart needs the help of heaven. Cry out to Jesus right now and ask Him for a new heart. Tell him that you want to be born again.

**Akin** sums up Mark 7:1-23 - (1) There are basically only 2 approaches to religion, each of which can be summed up in a single word: do or done. The world says the problem is out there and the answer is what I can do. The Bible says the problem is in here and the answer is what Christ has done! (2) You see in legalism we think better of ourselves than Jesus does. But in salvation, we think of ourselves as Jesus does: hopeless, helpless sinners in desperate need of a Savior. (3) 1 Samuel 16:7 says, "For the Lord sees not as man sees; man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." When the Lord examines your heart, what does He see? A self-righteous legalist trusting in what I do, or a humble sinner trusting only in what Jesus has done. The difference is of eternal significance.

#### **What can wash away my sin?**

Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh! precious is the flow  
That makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

**Mark 7:24 Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice.**

Wuest But from there, having arisen, He went off into the region of Tyre. And having entered into a home, He was desiring that not even one should know. But it was impossible to be hidden.

NET Mark 7:24 After Jesus left there, he went to the region of Tyre. When he went into a house, he did not want anyone to know, but he was not able to escape notice.

NLT Mark 7:24 Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre. He didn't want anyone to know which house he was staying in, but he couldn't keep it a secret.

ESV Mark 7:24 And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden.

NIV Mark 7:24 Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret.

GNT Mark 7:24 κεθεν ὁ ναστς πλθεν ες τρια Τρου. κα εσελθ ν ες οκ αν οδ να θελεν γν ναι, κα ο κδυνθη λαθε ν.

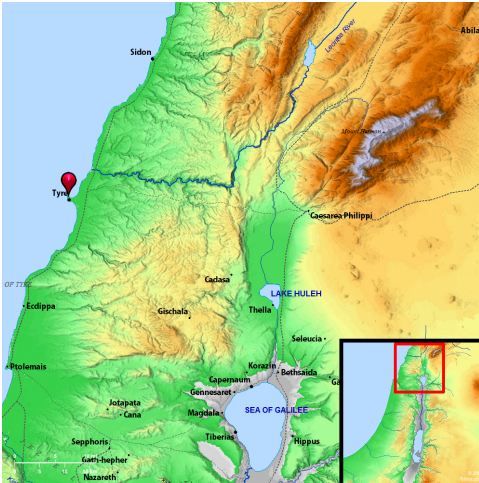
KJV Mark 7:24 And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but he could not be hid.

ASV Mark 7:24 And from thence he arose, and went away into the borders of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered into a house, and would have no man know it; and he could not be hid.

CSB Mark 7:24 He got up and departed from there to the region of Tyre and Sidon. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it, but He could not escape notice.

- **from:** Mt 15:21-28
- **Tyre:** Mk 3:8 Ge 10:15,19 49:13 Jos 19:28,29 Isa 23:1-4,12 Eze 28:2,21,22

- **and would:** Mk 2:1 3:7 6:31,32 Isa 42:2 Mt 9:28 1Ti 5:25
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



**Tyre and Sidon**  
(Click to Enlarge)

### Related Passage:

Matthew 15:21 Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.

In this last section Mark describes two healing miracles that take place in Gentile territory, the first being the healing of a demon-possessed girl (Mk 7:24-30) and the second, the healing of a deaf man with a speech impediment (Mk 7:31-37). As [Akin](#) says "Both demonstrate that God's kingdom has come and Jesus is God's man for all peoples. Contrary to religious and racial bigots, no one is so unclean that they cannot receive the blessing and the touch of Jesus Christ: the God who "astonishes beyond measure" (Mark 7:37)." It is notable that this visit to Tyre is the only time Jesus was documented as venturing outside the borders of Israel. It is also notable that the Gentile territories of Tyre and Sidon had a long history of opposition to Israel, going back even to the time of the evil queen Jezebel who was from Tyre (1 Kings 16:31-32). The prophet had prophesied against Tyre (Ezekiel 26:3, 1-26)

[Constable](#) makes an excellent point - Jesus increased His ministry to Gentiles as He experienced increasing rejection from the Jews. This third withdrawal from Galilee took Jesus outside Palestine for the first time. Mark also recorded Jesus doing more things outside Galilee and fewer things within Galilee than the other evangelists. By pointing this out Mark helped his readers realize that ministry to Gentiles was God's will in view of Israel's final rejection of Jesus. There is a logical connection between this section and the one that precedes it (Mark 7:1-23). Jesus had explained why He did not observe the traditional separation from defiling associations. Now He illustrated that by going into Gentile territory. This contact would have rendered Him ceremonial unclean according to the Jews' traditions.

**Jesus got up** - It refers to Jesus standing up from a seated position after instructing the disciples

**And went away from there to the region of Tyre** - Tyre is a seaport city about 34 miles northwest of Capernaum (Sidon is 24 miles north on the coast) and is located in modern day Lebanon. One can only imagine the thoughts of the disciples as Jesus tells them they are heading for Gentile territory! Jesus has just declared all foods clean and now he in essence declares (by going to Tyre) all Gentiles "clean." Jesus is demonstrating a "Great Commission mentality," demonstrating that God's kingdom knows no ethnic, racial, national or gender barriers..

**Wuest** - Our Lord did not merely cross over the border into Phoenician territory, but He went deep into the heart of the country.

**James Edwards** says "Tyre probably represented the most extreme expression of paganism, both actually and symbolically, that a Jew could expect to encounter" (Pillar NTC-Mark)

[Akin](#) says "Unfortunately, too many Jews of that day continued to suffer from "the Jonah complex." They could not imagine that God would extend His salvation beyond the borders of Israel. Jesus is about to turn all of that on its head. "From a socioreligious perspective, Jesus' visit to Tyre universalizes the concept of Messiah in terms of geography, ethnicity, gender and religion in a way entirely unprecedented in Judaism." (Edwards, Ibid). This Savior is not for just one nation, He is for all nations, and so should we be as well."

**And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it** - Why would Jesus want no one to know where He was? The most obvious answer is that He was trying to find a place to rest and restore, but it was not to be.

**Yet He could not escape notice** - Jesus cannot remain hidden, even in Gentile territory! Mark helps us understand why Jesus could

not escape notice even in Tyre, for earlier we read that people "from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and beyond the Jordan, and the vicinity of **Tyre and Sidon**, a great number of people heard of all that He was doing and came to Him." (Mk 3:8+)

**Mt Henry:** V24-30. Christ never put any from him that fell at his feet, which a poor trembling soul may do. As she was a good woman, so a good mother. This sent her to Christ. His saying, Let the children first be filled, shows that there was mercy for the Gentiles, and not far off. She spoke, not as making light of the mercy, but magnifying the abundance of miraculous cures among the Jews, in comparison with which a single cure was but as a crumb. Thus, while proud Pharisees are left by the blessed Saviour, he manifests his compassion to poor humbled sinners, who look to him for children's bread. He still goes about to seek and save the lost.

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**Mark 7:24-30 - "As Thou Wilt"** - Matthew 15:21-28 - JESUS' ministry in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon is marked by the wonderful story of the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). He had not planned a public ministry in these parts, but Mark tells us "He could not be hid." Neither can a true Christian be hidden; men will find him out.

This woman, outside the pale of His ministry to Israel, besought Him for her demonized daughter, but we read, "He answered her not a word." Prayer often meets such a Divine silence, but few of us press on to an answer as did this needy soul. Too often we take silence to mean refusal.

The disciples, bothered by her begging, asked our Lord to respond and send her away. These poor men were continually trying to handle the cases that came to Jesus, but not in His way. He answers, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," which indicates that they had meant for Him to grant her request to get rid of her. It is another clear declaration of His ministry to the Jew first. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

Not rebuffed at this, the woman beseeches Him, "Lord, help me," identifying herself with her daughter's need. Still stronger is the Lord's reply: "It is not good to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." It is a severe answer. We pass over the sternness of our Lord in these soft, sentimental days. Had the woman come with less than genuine, importunate faith, this would have sent her away insulted—this calling the Jews "children" and the Gentiles "dogs." But our Lord uses the term for little household dogs, and the woman catches the clue. "True, we may not have the bread, but surely we may share the crumbs." Here is humility and perseverance that will not be denied! It is he who is willing to take crumbs who receives bread.

Such faith draws from our Lord the gracious answer: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Notice, it is as thou wilt. There is a faith that desires and asks, but here faith goes further and wills. Jesus tells us (Mark 11:23) that whoever shall command a mountain to be moved and shall not doubt but believe, he shall have whatever he says. Mind you, He does not say, "Whosoever shall ask God to move the mountain," but "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed." Here is faith that dares to command. "Concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me" (Isa. 45:11). Mark tells us that He said, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Such faith always sends us on our way; and as we go we are cleansed, as it was with the lepers (Luke 17:14). The woman went, Mark tells us, and found it even as He had said. So did the nobleman (John 4:51). Oh, how rare is the faith that takes Him at His word and goes on believing! (Vance Havner)

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## **Ian Paisley - The Unconcealable Christ      "He could not be hid" Mark 7:24**

### **I. The Unconcealable Christ Because of His Light**

Christ is the Light of the world, how then could He be hid? Christ did not put His light under a bed. He put it on a candlestick. He was the true Light which lighteth every man coming into the world (John 1:9).

### **II. The Unconcealable Christ Because of His Life**

"In Christ is life and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4). How then could He be hid? He came to give men life that they might have it more abundantly. Life is unconcealable. Moses' mother in three months discovered that (see Hebrews 11:23).

### **III. The Unconcealable Christ Because of His Love**

Christ was unconcealable because His love was unconcealable. "Behold how He loved him" the Jews exclaimed of Christ's love for Lazarus (John 11:36). It was so visible.

Thank God Christ cannot be hid. (A Text A Day Keeps the Devil Away)

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## **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - HE COULD NOT BE HID Mark 7:24**

I. Who? (1) Christ as God mysteriously incarnated. (2) As His Gift to a starving world. (3) As the Light of men.

II. Why? "He could not be hid." (1) Because of Old Testament prophecy. (2) Because of His character. It was not possible to hide



love, light, life. (3) Because He had gifts for men.

III. When? "He could not be hid." (1) When in the bosom of His Father. The beloved Son must be given up. (2) When after He was thirty years of age. Then he presented Himself to John at Jordan as the Lamb of God. (3) When in the house. It was noised abroad. No house big enough for Him. (4) When in the tomb. Death and the grave could not hide Him.

IV. To whom? "He cannot be hid." (1) To those who seek Him. "Ye shall find Me when ye shall seek for Me with all your heart" (Jer. 29:13). Seek and ye shall find. (2) In those who find Him. When Christ dwells in the heart the fragrance of His sweet Name and the light of His presence cannot be hid. "He could not be hid," but He may hide Himself (John 12:36). (3) To the unbelieving world. For the time will yet come when "every eye shall see Him." The same Jesus shall in like manner come "as ye have seen Him go into Heaven" (Acts 1:11). (4) To the dead, small and great. He will be "Judge of all" (Rev. 20:11–15).

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#### **G C Morgan - He could not be hid. Mark 7.24**

The explanation of this statement is found in the story which follows, of which story it is the introduction. A mother, whose heart was wrung with anguish by reason of the suffering of her child, sought the aid of Jesus, and from such an appeal "He could not be hid." The declaration is made the more arresting by the fact that it follows the statement that He desired privacy: "He entered into a house and would have no man know it." And yet again it is interesting in view of the method of apparent reluctance which He adopted with her. These very surroundings serve to add new emphasis and value to the declaration. May we not at once say that here incidentally we have an illustration of the very reason of the Incarnation, and all that it accomplished? From human suffering God cannot withdraw Himself. He cannot be hidden. It appeals to Him irresistibly, because of the grace of His nature. When there is no eye to pity, His eye always pities; when there is no arm to save, His arm brings salvation. Herein, and herein alone, is our hope that at last sorrow and sighing shall flee away. And, moreover, in the fact that it is God, Who

is thus compelled by His nature to come to the relief of the sorrowing, is our tee that there will be no slight heal of our wounds. He does not deal with symptoms merely, but with the dire root of the disease. At He comes forth from His hiding-place, compelled by human agony, He comes to make no terms with that which has caused the pain; but He comes to end the pain by removing the cause. (Life Applications)

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#### **Developing Mega-Faith By Ed Dobson**

Scripture: Mark 7:24–30, especially verses 27–29. See also Matthew 15:21–28:

Introduction: In this story Jesus left the Jewish area of Galilee for the seaport of Tyre, a pagan Gentile area. This was a very un-Jewish and un-rabbinical thing to do, but He knew there was a desperate mother there. Notice the verbs describing her: she heard about Him, came, fell at his feet, and begged His help. Yet Jesus answered her not a word. Her response to His non-response was to keep crying for mercy. Desperate people do desperate things. When you're desperate you don't care what people think, nor do you give up easily. Jesus finally said, in summary, "I've been sent to the lost sheep of Israel. My mission is the Jews. Why take the food of children and give it to dogs?" The word dog would be better translated, little dog or puppy. "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their puppy." Jesus was not being unkind, but making a theological point—His first priority was the Jewish people. "Yes, Lord," the woman replied, "but even the puppies under the table get some crumbs." In other words, "What you're saying is true, but I don't need the full meal. Just a few crumbs will be sufficient." Can you sense this woman's faith? Jesus did. "Woman," He said, "you have great faith!" The Greek word is μέγας (meg'-as), source of the English prefix mega. This woman had mega-faith! From this story, notice the characteristics of mega-faith:

1. Mega-faith does not deny the problem. It is not the power of positive thinking or a way of looking at life through rose-colored glasses. Mega-faith is realistic, acknowledging the challenges, difficulties, struggles, and sufferings.
2. Mega-faith goes directly to the source of blessing. As soon as she heard of Christ, she came and fell at His feet. We sometimes depend too much on our own abilities and resources. But great faith knows that beyond our own resources is the source of all power and blessing—God Himself! (See Heb. 4:14–16.)
3. Mega-faith throws itself at the feet of Jesus. This was an act of submission, carrying the idea of abandonment to the purpose, plan, and power of God. She didn't come with her own plan and ask Jesus to bless it. She said, "Lord, I give this to You." It's frightening to give up control, but when we yield control to Christ, what freedom comes!
4. Mega-faith is persistent. At first, Jesus doesn't answer this woman; and when He finally did answer her, His tone was discouraging. But she kept begging. We should always pray and not faint. Prayer and faith persist, even when God seems to respond not a word.
5. Mega-faith repeats the word of God. This woman took what Jesus said, repeated it back to Him, then added a request to it. Great faith is anchored in Scripture.
6. Mega-faith responds with submission. "Yes, Lord," the woman said. Those are two very important words in our prayer

vocabulary. They acknowledge Him who is in charge, like Jesus in the Garden, “. . . not my will, but Your will be done.” Great faith surrenders the outcome to God, Who knows what is best for us.

7. Mega-faith is always rewarded. Going home, this woman found her child whole and the demon gone. Great faith is always rewarded with divine intervention which comes either through a miracle or through a specific message from God that enables us on the journey.

**Conclusion:** Maybe you're thinking, "That's easy for you to preach, but you don't know what I'm facing this morning." The beauty of this story is that it was not the faith of the demon-possessed girl that brought healing, it was the faith of her loving mother. If you can't muster mega-faith, learn to trust in the faith of those around you. God honors their faith on your behalf. Never underestimate the prayers and faith of others in your behalf. God, grant us great faith. Amen!

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**A Faith That Pleases God      Date preached: Dr. Timothy K. Beougher      SCRIPTURE: Mark 7:24–30**

**INTRODUCTION:** God desires faith. He is not interested in how much money you make or how good you look. He wants you to trust in Him. Here we see a **woman** of low standing who in her persistence and faith delighted Jesus and stands as an example to us.

1. The Person of Faith (vv. 25–26a).
2. The Persistence of Faith (v. 26b).
3. The Test of Faith (v. 27).
4. The Response of Faith (v. 28).
5. The Result of Faith (vv. 29–30).

**CONCLUSION:** God often brings growth in our life through struggles; true growth in faith does not come easily. We must come to the Lord. We must approach Him humbly. We must display a persistent faith.

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**J C Ryle - Mark 7:24-30** - WE know nothing of the woman, who is here mentioned, beyond the facts that we here read. Her name, her former history, the way in which she was led to seek our Lord, though a Gentile, and dwelling in the borders of Tyre and Sidon,—all these things are hidden from us. But the few facts that are related about this woman are full of precious instruction. Let us observe them, and learn wisdom.

In the first place, this passage is meant to encourage us to pray for others. The woman who came to our Lord, in the history now before us, must doubtless have been in deep affliction. She saw a beloved child possessed by an unclean spirit. She saw her in a condition in which no teaching could reach the mind, and no medicine could heal the body,—a condition only one degree better than death itself. She hears of Jesus, and beseeches Him to “cast forth the devil out of her daughter.” She prays for one who could not pray for herself, and never rests till her prayer is granted. By prayer she obtains the cure which no human means could obtain. Through the prayer of the mother, the daughter is healed. On her own behalf that daughter did not speak a word; but her mother spoke for her to the Lord, and did not speak in vain. Hopeless and desperate as her case appeared, she had a praying mother, and where there is a praying mother there is always hope.

The truth here taught is one of deep importance. The case here recorded is one that does not stand alone. Few duties are so strongly recommended by Scriptural example, as the duty of intercessory prayer. There is a long catalogue of instances in Scripture, which show the benefits that may be conferred on others by praying for them. The nobleman's son at Capernaum,—the centurion's servant,—the daughter of Jairus, are all striking examples. Wonderful as it may seem, God is pleased to do great things for souls, when friends and relations are moved to pray for them. “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” (James 5:16.)

Fathers and mothers are especially bound to remember the case of this woman. They cannot give their children new hearts. They can give them Christian education, and show them the way of life; but they cannot give them a will to choose Christ's service, and a mind to love God. Yet there is one thing they can always do;—they can pray for them. They can pray for the conversion of profligate sons, who will have their own way, and run greedily into sin. They can pray for the conversion of worldly daughters, who set their affections on things below, and love pleasure more than God. Such prayers are heard on high. Such prayers will often bring down blessings. Never, never let us forget that the children for whom many prayers have been offered, seldom finally perish. Let us pray more for our sons and daughters. Even when they will not let us speak to them about religion, they cannot prevent us speaking for them to God.

In the second place, this passage is meant to teach us to persevere in praying for others. The woman whose history we are now reading, appeared at first to obtain nothing by her application to our Lord. On the contrary, our Lord's reply was discouraging. Yet she did not give up in despair. She prayed on, and did not faint. She pressed her suit with ingenious arguments. She would take no

refusal. She pleaded for a few “crumbs” of mercy, rather than none at all. And through this holy importunity she succeeded. She heard at last these joyful words: “For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.”

Perseverance in prayer is a point of great moment. Our hearts are apt to become cool and indifferent, and to think that it is no use to draw near to God. Our hands soon hang down, and our knees wax faint. Satan is ever labouring to draw us off from our prayers, and filling our minds with reasons why we may give them up.—These things are true with respect to all prayers, but they are especially true with respect to intercessory prayer. It is always far more meagre than it ought to be. It is often attempted for a little season, and then left off. “We see no immediate answer to our prayers. We see the persons for whose souls we pray, going on still in sin. We draw the conclusion that it is useless to pray for them, and allow our intercession to come to an end.

In order to arm our minds with arguments for perseverance in intercessory prayer, let us often study the case of this woman. Let us remember how she prayed on and did not faint, in the face of great discouragement. Let us mark how at last she went home rejoicing, and let us resolve, by God’s grace, to follow her example.

Do we know what it is to pray for ourselves? This, after all, is the first question for self-inquiry. The man who never speaks to God about his own soul, can know nothing of praying for others. He is as yet Godless, Christless, and hopeless, and has to learn the very rudiments of religion. Let him awake, and call upon God.

But do we pray for ourselves? Then let us take heed that we pray for others also. Let us beware of selfish prayers,—prayers which are wholly taken up with our own affairs, and in which there is no place for other souls beside our own. Let us name all whom we love before God continually. Let us pray for all,—the worst, the hardest, and the most unbelieving. Let us continue praying for them year after year, in spite of their continued unbelief. God’s time of mercy may be a distant one. Our eyes may not see an answer to our intercessions. The answer may not come for ten, fifteen, or twenty years. It may not come till we have exchanged prayer for praise, and are far away from this world. But while we live, let us pray for others. It is the greatest kindness we can do to any one, to speak for him to our Lord Jesus Christ. The day of judgment will show that one of the greatest links in drawing some souls to God, has been the intercessory prayer of friends.

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#### **Vance Havner - "As Thou Wilt" Matthew 15:21-28 Mark 7:24-30**

JESUS' ministry in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon is marked by the wonderful story of the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). He had not planned a public ministry in these parts, but Mark tells us "He could not be hid." Neither can a true Christian be hidden; men will find him out.

This woman, outside the pale of His ministry to Israel, besought Him for her demonized daughter, but we read, "He answered her not a word." Prayer often meets such a Divine silence, but few of us press on to an answer as did this needy soul. Too often we take silence to mean refusal.

The disciples, bothered by her begging, asked our Lord to respond and send her away. These poor men were continually trying to handle the cases that came to Jesus, but not in His way. He answers, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," which indicates that they had meant for Him to grant her request to get rid of her. It is another clear declaration of His ministry to the Jew first. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

Not rebuffed at this, the woman beseeches Him, "Lord, help me," identifying herself with her daughter's need. Still stronger is the Lord's reply: "It is not good to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." It is a severe answer. We pass over the sternness of our Lord in these soft, sentimental days. Had the woman come with less than genuine, importunate faith, this would have sent her away insulted—this calling the Jews "children" and the Gentiles "dogs." But our Lord uses the term for little household dogs, and the woman catches the clue. "True, we may not have the bread, but surely we may share the crumbs." Here is humility and perseverance that will not be denied! It is he who is willing to take crumbs who receives bread.

Such faith draws from our Lord the gracious answer: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Notice, it is as thou wilt. There is a faith that desires and asks, but here faith goes further and wills. Jesus tells us (Mark 11:23) that whoever shall command a mountain to be moved and shall not doubt but believe, he shall have whatever he says. Mind you, He does not say, "Whosoever shall ask God to move the mountain," but "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed." Here is faith that dares to command. "Concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me" (Isa. 45:11). Mark tells us that He said, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Such faith always sends us on our way; and as we go we are cleansed, as it was with the lepers (Luke 17:14). The woman went, Mark tells us, and found it even as He had said. So did the nobleman (John 4:51). Oh, how rare is the faith that takes Him at His word and goes on believing!

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**Mark 7:25 But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His**

feet.

NET Mark 7:25 Instead, a woman whose young daughter had an unclean spirit immediately heard about him and came and fell at his feet.

NLT Mark 7:25 Right away a woman who had heard about him came and fell at his feet. Her little girl was possessed by an evil spirit,

ESV Mark 7:25 But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet.

NIV Mark 7:25 In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet.

GNT Mark 7:25 ἡ ἑθεὶς κοσσα γυνὴ περὶ αὐτοῦ, ἥ ἔχεν τὴν υἱοῦ τριῶν αὐτῆς πνευματικῶς ἄρτον, ἡθοῦσα προσέπεσεν πρὸς τοῦ πῶτος αὐτοῦ.

KJV Mark 7:25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet:

ASV Mark 7:25 But straightway a woman, whose little daughter had an unclean spirit, having heard of him, came and fell down at his feet.

CSB Mark 7:25 Instead, immediately after hearing about Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at His feet.

- **a woman:** Mt 15:22
- **whose little daughter:** Mk 9:17-23
- **at His feet.:** Mk 1:40 5:22,23,33 Lu 17:16 Ac 10:25,26 Rev 22:8,9
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A WOMAN COMES IMMEDIATELY

### Related Passage:

Matthew 15:22+ And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."

**But after hearing of Him** - The news of this Jewish Galilean miracle word spread quickly through the Gentile territory. Mark 3:8+ explains how they would have known about Jesus, for, people from "the vicinity of Tyre and Sidon" had been among the crowds that followed Him during His Galilean ministry.

**a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit** - Note this is a Gentile and woman illustrating how Jesus was quickly breaking down cultural barriers. It was "socially unacceptable" for her to even approach a Jewish rabbi, but that did not keep her from coming to Jesus!

**immediately came and fell at His feet** - (cf similar postures in. Mt. 17:14; Mk 1:40+; Mk 5:22+; Lk 17:16+; Jn 11:32) This Gentile woman was bold to come and was also humble in her approach, a good pattern for all who seek God's help to emulate! The verb **fell** is [prospipto](#) means to prostrate oneself, fall down before or at the feet of someone. Matthew's version uses the verb [proskuneo](#) which has more of a sense of expressing a reverential attitude which she clearly had toward Jesus.

**Paisley on fell at His feet** - We learn in the Gospels of nine prostrations before the Saviour. 1, Wise men (Matthew 2:11); 2, Jarius (Mark 5:22); 3, Women healed (Mark 5:33); 4, Syrophenician women (Mark 7:25); 5, Peter, (Luke 5:8); 6, The Leper (Luke 5:12); 7, The Gadarene (Luke 8:28); 8, The Samaritan (Luke 17:16); 9, Mary (John 11:32).

**Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.**

Wuest And the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician as to her race. And she kept on beseeching Him to cast out the demon out of her little daughter.

NET Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, of Syrophenician origin. She asked him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

NLT Mark 7:26 and she begged him to cast out the demon from her daughter. Since she was a Gentile, born in Syrian Phoenicia,

ESV Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

NIV Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

GNT Mark 7:26 ὁ γυνὴ ἡλλήνη, Συροφονικισσα τὴν γένει· καὶ ῥατατὴν νατταδαίμονιον κβλάκτισθυγάτρης αὐτῆς.

KJV Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

ASV Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by race. And she besought him that he would cast forth the demon out of her daughter.

CSB Mark 7:26 Now the woman was Greek, a Syrophenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to drive the demon out of her daughter.

NKJ Mark 7:26 The woman was a Greek, a Syro-Phoenician by birth, and she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

NRS Mark 7:26 Now the woman was a Gentile, of Syrophenician origin. She begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter.

- **Gentile**, Isa 49:12 Ga 3:28 Col 3:11
- **Syrophenician**: Mt 15:22
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 15:22+ And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed."23+ But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us."

#### Syrophenician Woman Appeals to Jesus

**Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race-** Matthew says she was a **Canaanite woman from that region**. Mark emphasize her gender, her ethnicity and her origin, all which would be "three strikes" against her in the eyes of the Jews! Paul aptly described this Gentile woman in his letter to Ephesus, calling on the Ephesian believers (many who had been idol worshipping Gentiles) to "remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12+). Mark adds she was a **Syrophenician** who would have been from Phoenicia within the Roman province of Syria. BDAG adds she was "an inhabitant of Syrophenicia, a district which was so called because Phoenicia belonged to the province of Syria."

**Evans** - Why does Matthew change Mark's "woman ... a Gentile, of the Syro-Phoenician race" to a **Canaanite woman**? The evangelist does this once again to give his version a biblical flavor that will be appreciated by his Jewish readers. Twice in the Old Testament Tyre and Sidon are linked to Philistia, the nation that plagued Israel as it tried to occupy and consolidate its hold on the land of Canaan (cf. Jer. 47:4; Joel 3:4). But the most significant passage may be 2 Sam. 24:7, where Tyre is linked to the "Canaanites." Thus, a Canaanite woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon carries with it strong biblical associations. This is a person that represents a people historically antagonistic toward Israel and clearly outside the covenant and with no expectations of messianic blessings. (BKBC-Mt-Lk)

**John MacArthur** adds that in addition to the strikes of being a **woman** and a **Gentile**, "she came from an area that was engulfed in pagan idolatry and was undoubtedly an idol worshiper herself. Tyre and Sidon were major centers of worship for the fertility goddess Astarte, known as Ashteroth in the Old Testament (cf. Jdg. 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sa. 7:3-4; 12:10; 31:10). In the minds of the Jews, no self-respecting rabbi would ever allow a Gentile, especially an idolatrous woman, to remain in his presence. The Lord wanted to show His disciples that the message of salvation was for the nations, those whom they had been taught were outside Gods' grace and

blessing....according to Matthew 15:23, "His disciples came and implored Him, saying, 'Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.' " They found the woman bothersome and simply wanted her to be silenced and sent away. The Lord, however, intended to teach them a valuable lesson about the character of genuine faith. (MNTC-Mk)

#### Related Resources:

- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Syrophoenician](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Syrophoenician](#) [Syrophoenician](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Syrophoenician](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Syrophoenician](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Syrophoenician](#)

**And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter-** The verb **kept asking** is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing her pleading again and again (cf persistence in pleading = Mt 7:7+, Luke 18:1-8+). She was unwilling to give up! Clearly her request implies that she had some degree of faith or belief that Jesus had the authority over the demonic world. Since casting out of demons was a miracle that Jesus had frequently carried out in Israel (Mk 1:39+), it is also likely she had heard of His power to cast out demons. "Her persistent request for help demonstrated her faith in Jesus." (Constable) "Her love for her daughter, the horror of demonic power in her home, combined with her confidence in Jesus' power, fueled her unwavering resolve. That heartfelt persistence was matched by an attitude of humble penitence....Recognizing her own unworthiness, like the publican in Luke 18:13+, she begged for mercy on the basis of His inherent goodness, not her own." (MacArthur)

Note that in Matthew's version she was crying out "Have mercy on me, Lord, **Son of David**. my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." Matthew's version also indicates although she kept crying out ([imperfect tense](#)) Jesus "did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "**Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us**" (Matthew 15:22, 23+) **MacArthur** adds that "Even though she was a Gentile, she acknowledged Him as Lord and identified Him by the messianic title "Son of David" (cf. Matt. 21:9). Her words suggest more than a superficial familiarity with the religious beliefs of neighboring Israel. She rightly understood who Jesus was." (MNTC-Mk)

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**Kept asking** (requesting) (2065)([erotao](#) from [éromai](#) = ask, inquire) means to ask for, usually with implication of an underlying question. It means to to plead, implore," or even to beg, and certainly this latter sense would seem to be at play in the woman's desperate situation.

**Cast...out** (throw, send, drive, take, put) (1544)([ekballō](#) from **ek** = out + **ballō** = to cast, throw, drive) means to cast, throw out often with the idea of force and thus frequently used of casting out demons (Mt 7:22, Mt 8:16, 31,9:34, 10:1, etc). Ekballo is used frequently in Mark - Mk. 1:34; Mk. 1:39; Mk. 1:43; Mk. 3:15; Mk. 3:22; Mk. 3:23; Mk. 5:40; Mk. 6:13; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 9:18; Mk. 9:28; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 9:47; Mk. 11:15; Mk. 12:8; Mk. 16:9; Mk. 16:17. In Mark 7:26 **ekballo** is "The aorist infinitive, speaking of the fact of the action, indicates that she wanted Jesus to cast the demon out at once and by one stroke." (Wuest)

**Demon** (1140)([daimonion](#) from **daimon** = demon) most often describes demons or evil spirits who have supernatural powers and are neither human nor divine (Mt 7:22). In the context of a Jewish use it more often refers to a demon, evil spirit, devil, or one who is subject to Satan. Daimonion was used in pagan Greek writings to refer to an inferior race of divine beings, lower than the Greek gods, but more powerful than men. Mk. 1:34; Mk. 1:39; Mk. 3:15; Mk. 3:22; Mk. 6:13; Mk. 7:26; Mk. 7:29; Mk. 7:30; Mk. 9:38; Mk. 16:9; Mk. 16:17;

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [John MacArthur's summary of four ways Scripture describes demon possession](#)
- [Is there activity of demonic spirits in the world today](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- [Are demons fallen angels?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demons?](#)
- [Do demons exist?](#)
- [What does Satan look like? What do demons look like?](#)
- [Can demons attach themselves to non-living/inanimate objects?](#)
- [If angels and demons can't die, what is the point of their engaging in battle?](#)
- [How are idols connected to demons \(Deuteronomy 32:16-17\)?](#)
- [Are the demons the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim?](#)



- [Questions about Angels & Demons](#)
- [Why did Jesus allow the demons to enter the herd of pigs?](#)
- [What are unclean spirits? Are unclean spirits demons?](#)
- [Is Satan the master of hell? Do Satan and his demons punish people in hell?](#)
- [Why did God allow Satan and the demons to sin?](#)
- [Why is "the devil made me do it" not a valid excuse?](#)
- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?](#)
- [How are Catholics able to perform exorcisms if many of their beliefs are unbiblical?](#)

**Mark 7:27 And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."**

Wuest And He was saying to her, Let first the children be fed. For it is not right to take the bread of the children and to throw it to the little dogs.

NET Mark 7:27 He said to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and to throw it to the dogs."

NLT Mark 7:27 Jesus told her, "First I should feed the children-- my own family, the Jews. It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs."

ESV Mark 7:27 And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

NIV Mark 7:27 "First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

GNT Mark 7:27 κα λέγει α τ , φες πρ τον χορτασθ ναι τ τ κνα, ο γ ρ σιν κα λ ν λαβε ν τ ν ρτον τ ν τ κνων κα το ς κυναρ ος βαλε ν.

KJV Mark 7:27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

ASV Mark 7:27 And he said unto her, Let the children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs.

CSB Mark 7:27 He said to her, "Allow the children to be satisfied first, because it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

NKJ Mark 7:27 But Jesus said to her, "Let the children be filled first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."

- **Let:** Mt 7:6 10:5 15:23-28 Ac 22:21 Ro 15:8 Eph 2:12
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Matthew 15:24+ But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26 And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

Notice that Matthew's version adds Jesus' statement "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

**And He was saying** ([imperfect tense](#)) **to her, "Let the children be satisfied first-** The **children** refers to the Jews, "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Paul gave the same priority to the Jews regarding the Gospel in Romans 1:16+ writing " I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, **to the Jew first** and also to the Greek (GENTILE)."

**Wuest** - He uses the illustration of the **children** of the household at the table, and their little pets under the table. It is seemly, proper, (kalon), He says, to see that the **children** are fed first, then the little dogs, their pets.

**Satisfied** ([5526](#))([chortazo](#) from **chortos** = fodder or grass or herbage of the field in general) means to feed with herbs, grass or hay and then to eat one's fill resulting in a state of being satisfied eat one's fill. **Chortazo** was used of the feeding of animals until they wanted nothing more. They were allowed to eat

until they were completely satisfied. Thus **chortazo** means to feed providing more than enough to satisfy. For example Matthew records that "they all ate (multitudes fed miraculously by Jesus with only 5 loaves and 2 fish), and were **satisfied**. And they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve full baskets." (Matthew 14:20)

**for it is not good** ([kalos](#) - 3x in Mark 7:17, 18, 19) **to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs**- While Jews often referred to the Gentiles as dogs who were like dirty, unclean scavengers and were completely unworthy and incapable of salvation, this is not what Jesus meant by referring to **the dogs**.

Think about what Jesus is saying -- If you literally take the children's bread and throw to the dogs, the children will go physically hungry. And yet this is almost a parabolic statement, for Jesus uses "**children**" to speak of the Jews. And while not specifically stated, the "**bread**" could easily be viewed as a veiled reference to Himself as the "**Bread of Life**." (Jn 6:35, 48+) He was to go first to "feed" the Jews the **Gospel of Jesus Christ** (Mk 1:1+), but sadly "He came to His own (JEWS ~ "THE CHILDREN"), and those who were His own did not receive (BUT IN FACT LARGELY REJECTED) Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God (JEWS AND GENTILES NOW IN ONE FAMILY), even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (Jn 3:3-7+). (Jn 1:11-13+)

MacArthur adds "Though some believed, the majority of people rejected Him (John 6:66; cf. Matt. 11:20–24), including the residents of His hometown of Nazareth (cf. Mark 6:1–6). The Jewish religious leaders had grown increasingly antagonistic (Mk 3:20–30) and sought to kill Him (Mk 3:6; cf. Matt. 12:14). King Herod, fearful that Jesus posed a threat to his political power, also wanted to execute Him (cf. Luke 13:31). Aware of the mounting opposition against Him, and knowing the cross was still months away, Jesus left Galilee for a concentrated time of training with His apostles. He(MNTC-Mk)

**Wuest** makes a great point about Jesus going first to the Jews - The Jews looked upon all Gentiles as dogs. It was a term of reproach. Paul called the Judaizers, dogs when he said (Phil. 3:2+), "Beware of the dogs." But our Lord did not use the Greek word **kuōn** here, the term for a dog. And He must have spoken Greek to this woman, for she would not know the Aramaic of the Jews. Greek was the international language of the day. The word Jesus used was **kunarium** "a little dog." In answering the woman thus, He was just staying by His commission, to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. **And that order of procedure was not favoritism, but only the method of reaching the large number through a selected smaller group.** The Jew was the chosen channel through which God has elected to reach the Gentiles. It would be just a wise efficiency to thus go to the Jew first. The Messiah, sent to Israel, was careful to preserve that order. And even when about to minister to a Gentile to whom His compassionate heart went out, He was careful to remind her of the fact that she came second, not first, in the great program of God.

**Dogs** ([2952](#))(**kunarium** a diminutive of **kuon** - dog) is the term for a little dog or puppy or what we might refer to as a "house dog." TDNT makes an interesting comment that "is probably chosen by Jesus in Mk. 7:27; Mt. 25:26 to show that there is a distinction between Jews and Gentiles but still to give the Gentiles a place in the house. The woman in her reply accepts the distinction but in so doing takes the place that is offered and finds the help she seeks." In sum, Jesus is not talking about a street scavenger but a household pet. Used 4x - Matt. 15:26; Matt. 15:27; Mk. 7:27; Mk. 7:28. No uses in the Septuagint.

**Barclay** comments that "In Greek, **diminutives** are characteristically affectionate. Jesus took the sting out of the word."

**Chuck Smith** on **dogs** - wild scavenger dogs that were hated by everybody. They would run in packs; they would attack sheep, they would attack children. And they were ferocious, vicious, hated animals. And it was very common for the Jews to call the Gentile dogs. And the word is equivalent to our English word bitch where it is a derogatory term. And so, they would use it, the word dog like a person would use the other word today, in a very derisive, derogatory way....There is another Greek word for dog, which is the word that Jesus used. It is that little household pet that's always under the table, that little pet of the family. And most of the Jewish homes had their little pet dogs, which were domesticated and lovable little animals under the table.

**Henry Morris** The "**dogs**" under the table (Mark 7:28) were understood to be small household pets. On the reasons for the seeming harshness of Jesus' reply to this Gentile woman, note that the Lord Jesus had come into the world to die for the sin of the whole world, but He had also come as Israel's promised Messiah. His seeming harshness to the Canaanite woman is best understood as not only a test of her faith in the God of Israel, but also as a means to show His disciples that Gentiles also were included in God's plan, and that they too could have saving faith.

**Believer's Study Bible** - Jesus was neither indifferent nor insensitive in His reply to the Syro-Phoenician woman. His approach is designed to test her faith and to demonstrate the extent of her faith to the disciples. The "little dogs" refer to small dogs which were kept as house pets. The parallel passage in Matt. 15:21-28 indicates that Jesus meant that His ministry was first taken to Israel and then subsequently to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:16). This woman, while recognizing this, demonstrated great faith. As a

result, Jesus honored her request. Believers today can rejoice because in the church there are no racial distinctions (cf. Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 3:11).

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### **Hard Sayings of the Bible - F F Bruce - The Children First?**

This was Jesus' response to the plea of a Gentile woman that he cure her demon-possessed daughter. The woman was a Syrophenician according to Mark, a Canaanite according to Matthew, who also records the incident (Mt 15:21-28). The incident took place during a brief visit paid by Jesus to the territory of Tyre and Sidon, north of Galilee.

The saying was a hard one in the first instance to the woman, yet not so hard that it put her off: if Jesus' healing ministry was for Jewish children and not for Gentile dogs, yet she reminded him that the dogs commonly get what the children leave over, and that was what she was asking him to give her and her daughter. To the modern reader it is hard because it seems so inconsistent with the character of Jesus. Its hardness is put in blunt terms by one writer: "Long familiarity with this story, together with the traditional picture of the gentleness of Jesus, tends to obscure the shocking intolerance of the saying."

Jesus' Palestinian ministry was directed to the Jewish people; Matthew, in his account of the present incident, represents him as saying to the woman, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 15:24 RSV). There are suggestions here and there in the record of the ministry that, as a sequel to it, blessing would be available for Gentiles too, but very few instances of direct blessing to Gentiles appear within the context of the ministry itself.

Why did the woman not take offense at such an unpromising response? One obvious reason was that she was determined to get what she wanted for her daughter. In addition, what if there was a twinkle in his eye as he spoke, as much as to say, "You know what we Jews are supposed to think of you Gentiles; do you think it is right for you to come and ask for a share in the healing which I have come to impart to Jews?" The written record can preserve the spoken words; it cannot convey the tone of voice in which they were said. Maybe the tone of voice encouraged the woman to persevere.

Again, what are we to say of the term "dogs"? That is a term of abuse, if ever there was one. The pariah dog was not an estimable animal in Near Eastern culture then, any more than he is today. But it is not the pariah dogs that are intended here, like those at the door of the rich man in the parable, whose attentions added to Lazarus's afflictions. It is the dogs beneath the table. That in itself might suggest that they are household pets, the children's playmates; and this is confirmed by the fact that the word for "dogs" used by both Jesus and the woman is a diminutive. Since the woman is said by Mark to have been a Greek (that is, one who spoke Greek), the Greek diminutive used by Mark may have been the word actually used in the conversation.

The woman was quick-witted enough to deduce from Jesus' words the kind of reply that would win the granting of her request: "Sir, even the little dogs under the table eat the children's leftovers!" The word faith is not mentioned in Mark's account of the incident (as it is mentioned in Mt 15:28), but the woman's reply expresses just the kind of faith that Jesus so greatly appreciated and that never failed to receive what it asked from him. Her daughter was healed immediately, and healed, as in the other instance of Gentile faith in the Synoptic Gospels (that of the Capernaum centurion and his sick servant), not by direct contact but at a distance.

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### **Question - [Why did Jesus call the Canaanite woman a dog?](#)**

**Answer:** In Matthew 15:21-28, Jesus encounters a Canaanite (Syrophenician) woman who begs Him to cure her daughter. Jesus initially refuses her request by saying, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs" (Matthew 15:26). Taken out of context, and especially in English, it's easy to mistake this for an insult. In the flow of the story, however, it's clear Jesus is creating a metaphor meant to explain the priorities of His ministry. He is also teaching an important lesson to His disciples.

Jews in Jesus' day sometimes referred to Gentiles as "dogs." In Greek, this word is *kuon*, meaning "wild cur" (Matthew 7:6; Luke 16:21; Philippians 3:2). Non-Jews were considered so unspiritual that even being in their presence could make a person ceremonially unclean (John 18:28). Much of Jesus' ministry, however, involved turning expectations and prejudices on their heads (Matthew 11:19; John 4:9-10). According to Matthew's narrative, Jesus left Israel and went into Tyre and Sidon, which was Gentile territory (Matthew 15:21). When the Canaanite woman approached and repeatedly asked for healing, the disciples were annoyed and asked Jesus to send her away (Matthew 15:23).

At this point, Jesus explained His current ministry in a way that both the woman and the watching disciples could understand. At that time, His duty was to the people of Israel, not to the Gentiles (Matthew 15:24). Recklessly taking His attention from Israel, in violation of His mission, would be like a father taking food from his children in order to throw it to their pets (Matthew 15:26). The exact word Jesus used here, in Greek, was *kunarium*, meaning "small dog" or "pet dog." This is a completely different word from the term *kuon*, used to refer to unspiritual people or to an "unclean" animal.

Jesus frequently tested people to prove their intentions, often through response questions or challenges (see John 4:16-18;

and 4:50–53). His response to the Canaanite woman is similar. In testing her, Jesus declined her request and explained that she had no legitimate expectation of His help. The woman, however, lived out the principle Jesus Himself taught in the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1–8). Her response proved that she understood fully what Jesus was saying, yet had enough conviction to ask anyway (Matthew 15:27). Jesus acknowledged her faith—calling it “great”—and granted her request (Matthew 15:28).

So, according to both the context and language involved, Jesus wasn’t referring to the Canaanite woman as a “dog,” either directly or indirectly. He wasn’t using an epithet or racial slur but making a point about the priorities He’d been given by God. He was also testing the faith of the woman and teaching an important lesson to His disciples. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

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#### Related Resource:

- [Did Jesus come only for the Jews and not the Gentiles?](#)

**Mark 7:28 But she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs."**

Wuest But she answered and says to Him. Yes, lord, yet the little dogs under the table are constantly eating from the little morsels of the little children.

NET Mark 7:28 She answered, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

NLT Mark 7:28 She replied, "That's true, Lord, but even the dogs under the table are allowed to eat the scraps from the children's plates."

ESV Mark 7:28 But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

NIV Mark 7:28 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

GNT Mark 7:28 ὁ περὶ ἧ καὶ λέγει αὐτὸς, Κρίε, καὶ τὰ κυνῶν ἀποκτῶ τὰς τραπέζης σθουσὶν πτὶν ψυχῶν τὴν παῖδων.

KJV Mark 7:28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

ASV Mark 7:28 But she answered and saith unto him, Yea, Lord; even the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs.

CSB Mark 7:28 But she replied to Him, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

NKJ Mark 7:28 And she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs under the table eat from the children's crumbs."

NRS Mark 7:28 But she answered him, "Sir, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

YLT Mark 7:28 And she answered and saith to him, 'Yes, sir; for the little dogs also under the table do eat of the children's crumbs.'

- **yet:** Ps 145:16 Isa 45:22 49:6 Mt 5:45 Lu 7:6-8 15:30-32 Ac 11:17,18 Ro 3:29 10:12 15:8,9 Eph 2:12-14 3:8
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE WOMAN'S BURST OF BOLDNESS

#### Related Passages:

Matthew 15:27+ But she said, “Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

**But she answered and said to Him** - It might have been tempting to give up and go away. This woman boldly persisted in her plea.

**Yes, Lord** - She doesn’t dispute that Gentiles were to Israel as dogs but says, **Yes, Lord**. She agrees with Jesus and again refers to Him as **Lord**. See referred to Jesus as **Son of David** and twice as **Lord** neither modes of addressing Jesus by most of the Jews

until His final entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:9), but within days their cry changed to "Crucify Him!" The following song by Darrell Evans was the nameless woman's song...

### Yes Lord

I'm trading my sorrow  
I'm trading my shame  
I'm laying it down for the joy of the Lord

I'm trading my sickness  
I'm trading my pain  
I'm laying it down for the joy of the Lord

And we say yes Lord yes Lord yes yes Lord  
Yes Lord yes Lord yes yes Lord

Yes Lord yes Lord yes yes Lord Amen

I'm pressed but not crushed persecuted not abandoned  
Struck down but not destroyed  
I'm blessed beyond the curse for his promise will endure  
And his joy's gonna be my strength

Though the sorrow may last for the night  
His joy comes with the morning

**Brian Bell** - But she wasn't coming to him on the goodness of her cause, but on the Goodness of His heart. Not on how she presented her plea, but instead on the excellence of His power. It is our task to simply be empty...so He can fill us. It is our task to confess our filthiness...so He can wash us. It is our task to be less than nothing...so He can be more than everything to us You're a dog – Yes Lord, but I will wag my tail, fetch, sit up, even beg for my Master. 4. You're a sheep – Yes, Lord, but sheep need a shepherd.

**Guelich** writes ""This "title" of **"Lord"** that consistently comes on the lips of "believers" in Matthew occurs only this one time with confession overtones in Mark and sets the stage for Jesus" concluding remark and his offer of help to the woman." ([WBC](#))

**Wuest** has another thought - The word **"Lord"** is in the Greek text, [kurios](#). It was used of the one to whom a person or thing belonged, about which he has the power of deciding. It refers to the master or disposer of a thing. It was in this sense that the woman used the term. She knew nothing of the deity (WUEST MIGHT BE CORRECT BUT REMEMBER SHE ADDRESSED HIM AS "SON OF DAVID" A CLEAR MESSIANIC TITLE IN Mt 15:22+) of the Jewish Messiah, and consequently did not use this word as Paul does when referring to the Son of God, using kurios (κυριος) as a designation of His deity. The word "lord" therefore is not capitalized in the translation below.

**Disciple's Study Bible on Son of David** - The foreigner correctly identified Jesus as Messiah, but she gained healing for her daughter through persistent faith, not proper identification. The first messianic title applied to Jesus in the New Testament is **Son of David**. This title for Jesus provides a major link between the Old Testament and the New. Both Matthew's and Luke's genealogies are at pains to establish that Jesus is descended from David (Mt 1:6+; Lk 3:31+). This enabled early believers to claim the Old Testament promise that there would always be an heir to David's throne (2 Sa 7; Ps 132:11-12+). Compare Ro 1:3+. The crowds and individuals in need often used this title for Jesus (Mt 9:27+; Mt 15:22; 20:31; Lk 18:38+). Jesus did not use the title for Himself, possibly because it was so open to political interpretation. Jesus had to show He fulfilled Old Testament expectations. He did so by fulfilling the role of the Suffering Servant and letting all other titles be understood in that light. Thus He fulfilled the role of the true kings of Israel, that of servant (2 Sa 7:19) and shepherd (2 Sa 7:7).

**Wuest** - How adroit was this woman's plea. Love sharpens the sensibilities and reason (AND I WOULD ADD A SENSE OF DESPERATION REGARDING HER DAUGHTER WITH THE "SOLUTION" STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER! A MOTHER'S LOVE IS A POWERFUL FORCE!).

**but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs**- Notice this Gentile acknowledges that the Jews had the first claim on Jesus' ministry by referring to **the children's crumbs**. That is to say the Jews got the first piece of bread (AKA "THE GOSPEL") so to speak, but she would be happy to take the crumbs. And so secondly, she accepted her low place before Jesus by not debating the reference to little dogs. Thirdly, notice that she picks up on Jesus' parabolic statement about dogs and children. She

had ears to hear what He was saying. And so she made the point that if literal little **dogs** (she also uses kunarion = little dogs, pets) eating under the table had a right to the literal crumbs, then she, like a "little Gentile dog," had a right to a Gospel "crumb" that would fall from Jesus' "table." And without going too far, sadly when Jesus had given the "bread" of the Gospel to the "children" for the most part they discarded it, so that what was "on the floor" so to speak was hardly just a few crumbs, but a "full meal of Gospel bread!" Whereas most of the "children" did not receive (Jn 1:11+), she did receive what Jesus offered (cf Jn 1:12+).

**Constable** points out that "She also used the diminutive form of **"crumbs"** (Gr. psichion) that expressed her unworthiness to receive a large blessing."

Note also that she is not arguing with Jesus, but simply taking Jesus' parabolic analogy one step further. Anyone who has a pet dog can understand her logic, for the dogs prowl around under the table ready to grab any morsel that falls to the floor. From Jesus' response in verse 29, it is clear that He was not offended by her statement and in fact saw in her response a humble heart and a heart of faith.

**Guzik** - We need to see the power of coming to God as we are, and letting Him make true His promises to those weak and unclean. If the woman had responded, "Who are you calling a dog?" she would not have received from Jesus what her daughter needed. Her humble, faith-filled submission to Jesus brought the victory. "Nothing appealed to our blessed Lord more than **faith** coupled with **humility**." (Ironsides)

**Chuck Smith** - Now, in those days they did not have knives and forks and spoons. They did not have eating utensils. They didn't even use chopsticks. They used the utensils that God first created for man to eat with. They used their hands. And the eating was an interesting process. Always bread. And usually you would break your bread, pull it off and then dip it in the soup or in the sauces or in whatever. And you'd use your bread oftentimes as sort of a spoon. And when we're over there, we usually go out for what they call an oriental meal, but it's more of an Arabic type of a meal, where they serve you the pita bread and all of these sauces. And you break the thing and you do your dipping and all, and you have all these exotic kind of salsas and everything else to eat with your pita bread. But they use their hands; they use their fingers. Now, of course, by the time you're through eating, you've got the grease and everything else all over your hands. So, the final piece of bread, you would take it and use it to wipe off as a napkin. You'd use it to wipe off your hands. And then, you'd toss it under the table to the little dog down there waiting, standing up and "woof, woof." You stand up and you drop him this final piece of bread that had all these delicious juices on it. And the dogs would eat these crumbs or these pieces of bread that would be used to wipe off the hands from the master's table.

**Mark 7:29 And He said to her, "Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter."**

NET Mark 7:29 Then he said to her, "Because you said this, you may go. The demon has left your daughter."

NLT Mark 7:29 "Good answer!" he said. "Now go home, for the demon has left your daughter."

ESV Mark 7:29 And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter."

NIV Mark 7:29 Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

GNT Mark 7:29 κα ε πεν α τ , Δι το τον τ ν λ γον παγε, ξελ λυθεν κ τ ς θυγατρ ς σου τ δαιμ νιον.

KJV Mark 7:29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter.

ASV Mark 7:29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the demon is gone out of thy daughter.

CSB Mark 7:29 Then He told her, "Because of this reply, you may go. The demon has gone out of your daughter."

NKJ Mark 7:29 Then He said to her, "For this saying go your way; the demon has gone out of your daughter."

NRS Mark 7:29 Then he said to her, "For saying that, you may go-- the demon has left your daughter."

YLT Mark 7:29 And he said to her, 'Because of this word go; the demon hath gone forth out of thy daughter;'

- Isa 57:15,16 66:2 Mt 5:3 8:9-13 1Jn 3:8
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**THE WOMAN'S  
MEGA FAITH**



## Related Passages:

Matthew 15:28+ Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish."  
And her daughter was healed at once.

**And He said to her, "Because of this answer go - Because of this answer** is literally "because of this word." **Answer** is [logos](#), so she replied to Jesus with a **word** that gave evidence of her **great faith** for Matthew's parallel adds "O woman, **your faith is great**; it shall be done for you as you wish." (Mt 15:28+, cf another Gentile's faith = the Roman Centurion Mt 8:10+, Lk 7:9+)

**Adam Clarke** noted that this Gentile woman's prayer had nine important features "1. It is short; 2. humble; 3. full of faith; 4. fervent; 5. modest; 6. respectful; 7. rational; 8. relying only on the mercy of God; 9. persevering."

**The demon has gone out of your daughter** - The woman does not ask for any additional evidence, but takes Jesus at His promise. She believed what He said. **Has gone** ([exerchomai](#) same verb used in verse 30 of the demon) is in the [perfect tense](#), describing the demon's leaving at a point in time and still gone, so that her present state was not possessed!

**MacArthur** writes "With the woman in Tyre, the context suggests that her faith was more than just a nominal belief in Jesus' healing power. Her humble, reverent, and persistent appeal to Christ implies that God was at work in her heart, drawing her to salvation (cf. John 6:44).

**Edwards** points out that ""In contrast to the tradition of the elders Jesus [authoritatively] embraces the alienated of the Mosaic and rabbinic tradition: a **leper** (Mark 1:40-45+), **tax collectors and sinners** (Mark 2:13-17+), and even **unclean Gentiles**, including a Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30)." (PNTC-Mark)

**Mark 7:30 And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.**

NET Mark 7:30 She went home and found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

NLT Mark 7:30 And when she arrived home, she found her little girl lying quietly in bed, and the demon was gone.

ESV Mark 7:30 And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

NIV Mark 7:30 She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

GNT Mark 7:30 καὶ πελθοῦσα εἰς τὸ οἶκόν αὐτῆς εἶπεν τῷ παιδί ὃν βεβλήμινον πρὶν κλῆναι καὶ τὸ δαίμωνιον ἐξηλυθῆς.

KJV Mark 7:30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed.

ASV Mark 7:30 And she went away unto her house, and found the child laid upon the bed, and the demon gone out.

CSB Mark 7:30 When she went back to her home, she found her child lying on the bed, and the demon was gone.

NKJ Mark 7:30 And when she had come to her house, she found the demon gone out, and her daughter lying on the bed.

NRS Mark 7:30 So she went home, found the child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

YLT Mark 7:30 and having come away to her house, she found the demon gone forth, and the daughter laid upon the couch.

- **going back to her home:** Joh 4:50-52
- **she found:** 1Jn 3:8
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And going back to her home** - This statement is significant as it shows the woman walked back home in faith, not by sight (she did not ask Jesus to accompany her or give her a sign that her daughter had been healed of the demon). **Matthew 15:28** has "Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once."

**She found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left**- Jesus had promised and she witnessed the fulfillment of His promise. It is interesting that this episode recounts the only time in Mark that Jesus healed from a distance without speaking a command. **Having left** ([exerchomai](#)) is in the [perfect tense](#), in this case indicating that the demon left the moment Jesus issued the command (He never spoke it per se, but clearly the demon responded to Jesus' authority) and remained gone! The demon was gone for good! The little girl's state was "exorcised" of the demon!

[Akin](#) applies this story to us today - What a magnificent picture of salvation we have in this story. Yes Lord, we are all dogs under the table with no rights whatsoever as a member of the family. I acknowledge I don't deserve a place at the table, but I believe there is enough even for me on the table! I know you have some for me. I don't deserve it, but I desperately need it. Just a few crumbs will be enough. That I believe. Then in amazing grace and mercy our Savior lifts us up, no longer a dog (sinner) but a child (saved), no longer under the table but now a member of the family at the table. Are you willing to see yourself as the dog you are that you might be transformed into the child you might become?! Your sin is greater than perhaps you realize but His grace is greater than you could ever imagine.

And so Jesus is teaching His disciples that

FOODS ARE CLEAN  
GENTILES ARE CLEAN!

**Mark 7:31 Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis.**

NET Mark 7:31 Then Jesus went out again from the region of Tyre and came through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee in the region of the Decapolis.

NLT Mark 7:31 Jesus left Tyre and went up to Sidon before going back to the Sea of Galilee and the region of the Ten Towns.

ESV Mark 7:31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.

NIV Mark 7:31 Then Jesus left the vicinity of Tyre and went through Sidon, down to the Sea of Galilee and into the region of the Decapolis.

GNT Mark 7:31 Κα π λιν ξελθ ν κ τ ν ρ ω ν Τ ρου λθεν δι Σιδ νος ε ς τ ν θ λασσαν τ ς Γαλιλα ς ν μ σον τ ν ρ ω ν Δεκαπ λεως.

KJV Mark 7:31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

ASV Mark 7:31 And again he went out from the borders of Tyre, and came through Sidon unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the borders of Decapolis.

CSB Mark 7:31 Again, leaving the region of Tyre, He went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis.

NKJ Mark 7:31 Again, departing from the region of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the region of Decapolis to the Sea of Galilee.

NRS Mark 7:31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre, and went by way of Sidon towards the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis.

YLT Mark 7:31 And again, having gone forth from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis,

- **from:** Mk 7:24 Mt 15:29-31
- **Decapolis:** Mk 5:20 Mt 4:25
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## Related Passages

Matthew 15:29-31+ **SETS THE SCENE FOR Mk 7:31-37** Departing from there (Tyre - Mt 15:21, 28), Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there. 30 And **large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them.** 31 So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

This specific miracle on this man is described only in Mark, although as noted in Matthew's passage above, Jesus clearly healed others who were mute and in fact Matthew's passage says MANY with infirmities came and He healed them ALL.

**Again He went out from the region of Tyre, and came through Sidon**- Notice that Jesus did not immediately turn back to Galilee, but went further north of Tyre some 20-24 miles to the Gentile seaport of **Sidon** on the Phoenician coast. What He accomplished in this Gentile territory is not described in Scripture. Undoubtedly one reason He continued deeper into Gentile territory is because He was training the twelve so that they see the importance of reaching the unreached, especially those outside of Israel. And it is interesting that He is taking the long way back home. This may have been to give the disciples some much needed rest, but we cannot be dogmatic.

Jesus mentioned **Tyre** and **Sidon** in His condemnation of Chorazin and Bethsaida declaring "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in **Tyre** and **Sidon** which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 "Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for **Tyre** and **Sidon** in the day of judgment than for you." (Mt. 11:21-22) We know He did at least one miracle in casting the demon out of the Syrophoenician woman's little daughter and one has to believe He may have performed other miracles in this region. In any event He did far more miracles in Chorazin and Bethsaida, which should have opened their eyes to recognize Him as their Messiah, but which sadly did not.

**Wuest** notes that "A glance at the map shows that Phoenicia is north west of the Sea of Galilee. Our Lord thus went south east, and skirted the eastern shore of this sea to reach the region of Decapolis, which was on the south eastern shore."

**Akin** - All together this "horseshoe-shaped" journey would have constituted a 120 mile walk. It is an unusual course to be sure. It may have been taken to further avoid the Herodians and Pharisees who were after Him. It may also have been intended as an extension of his ministry to the disciples and also the Gentiles.

**To the Sea of Galilee, within the region of Decapolis**- Jesus is now back in the region where He had healed the Gadarene demoniac (Mk 5:20+) who may have prepared the population for Jesus appearance in this territory. Nevertheless, the fact that Jesus would return to this region is somewhat surprising, for we recall the previous "send off" from Decapolis in Mark 5:17+ when the people **"began to implore Him to leave their region"**

**THOUGHT** -Is there a lesson here? I think so and it is that Jesus does not necessarily give up on us when we initially entreat Him to leave us alone. I had this attitude for 39 years but praise God, His Spirit was like the "Hound of Heaven" Who kept pursuing me and finally opening my spiritually blind eyes! And my guess is that many reading this thought would express similar sentiments, and are now incomparably grateful He did not give up!

**Swete** points out that "The Lord is again in the land of Israel, for Gaulanitis, though the towns were Hellenised, had belonged to the tribe of Manasseh (Jos. 13:29 f.), and still had a predominantly Jewish population."

## Related Resource:

- Alfred Edersheim - [A GROUP OF MIRACLES AMONG A SEMI-HEATHEN POPULATION](#) (St. [Matt. 15:29-31](#); St. [Mark 7:31-37](#); St. [Mark 8:22-26](#); St. [Matt. 11:27-30](#).)

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## THE IMPEDIMENTS REMOVED Mark 7:31-37 - James Smith in Handfuls of Purpose

In Christ there was an all-sufficiency for all times. The holy anointing was upon Him, so that He could preach the Gospel by His mighty saving acts as well as by His comforting words. Our words are plentiful, but how much Gospel has been found in our deeds?

### I. The Sorrowing Subject.

1. HE WAS DEAF. The most joyful tidings met with no response in his soul, this avenue was closed. But although he could not hear the words of love, he could see an act of grace. Like many more who are deaf to

the preached Word but not blind to the acted Word.

2. HE HAD AN IMPEDIMENT IN HIS SPEECH. Those deaf to God's words will never be able to speak freely for Him. A dull ear makes a stammering tongue. His promise is, "When I speak with thee I will open thy mouth" (Ezekiel 3:27).

3. HE WAS BROUGHT TO JESUS. This is better than trying to argue with him. If our friends are deaf to the call of God let us take them to the Lord in prayer. His virtue can adapt itself to the need of all (Luke 8:46).

## II. The Saving Acts of Jesus.

1. HE TOOK HIM ASIDE. The first step into the liberty and joy of His salvation is to get alone with Jesus. Let us turn aside, like Moses, "and see this great sight" (Exod. 3:3). Enter into thy closet, and in the sanctuary of thy soul hear Him.

2. HE PUT HIS FINGERS INTO HIS EARS. It is often the din of the world that deafens the ear to the voice of God. Yes, when alone with Him His fingers are sure to find out the hidden cause of every impediment. Has it not been so in our experience? Have we not been constrained to say again and again, "This is the finger of God" (Exod. 8:19).

3. HE SPIT. This common act may deem unworthy of the Son of God. But there is nothing insignificant in the doings of Christ. Out of His mouth comes the healing balm (Mark 8:23). "He sent His Word, and healed them" (Psa. 107:20).

4. HE TOUCHED HIS TONGUE. When the ear is opened the tongue is loosed. Those who have really heard what God the Lord hath spoken "cannot but speak the things which they have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20). A dumb tongue indicates a deaf ear.

5. HE LOOKED UP TO HEAVEN. The source of all grace and blessing is in the heart of the Father. Every good gift is "from above." All who would follow His steps in doing the works of God must be conscious of the need of "looking up."

6. HE SIGHED. What a spontaneous expression of the depth and reality of His sorrow and sympathy! Blessed sigh that betrays the secret, sacred, suffering soul of the Saviour. He can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities. "Set a mark on those that sigh" (Ezek. 9:4).

7. HE SAID, "BE OPENED" He spake, and it was done. His Word shall not return void. His Word was with power (Luke 4:32) Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. With equal authority He, by the Holy Ghost, hath said, "Be filled with the Spirit." Be opened, be saved, be filled.

## III. The Sudden Change. Straightway his ears were opened The Word of God is intended to, and always does, and always will, take immediate effect when spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit.

1. HIS EARS WERE OPENED. The need was great, the will was yielded, the work was done And it was all His doing. Opened ears and honest hearts to hear and receive the Word of God form the channel through which the fullness and power of God flows.

2. HIS TONGUE WAS LOOSED. How could he speak of Him of whom he had not heard? A draught of the new wine from heaven was a wonderful power in loosening the tongue (Acts 2:1-13). The tongue can no man tame, but the Holy Ghost can both tame it, and tune it, and make it a weapon mighty for God.

3. HE SPAKE PLAIN. A man usually speaks plain when he thoroughly knows what he is talking about, and feels the power of it in his own soul Abraham declared plainly, because he was persuaded of the promises, and had embraced them (Heb. 11:13-14), We believe and therefore speak. If Pentecost means anything it means plain speaking, because it implies definite and powerful conviction.

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## THE PLIGHT OF ALL PEOPLE - HEALING A DEAF MAN - Charles Ryrie (Borrow [The miracles of our Lord](#)) (Mark 7:31-37).

This miracle, recorded only by Mark, occurred as Christ returned from Tyre and Sidon where he had granted the request of the Syro-Phoenician woman by healing her daughter. It was a long, circuitous route that he traveled from the Mediterranean to Decapolis. Decapolis, lying south and east of Galilee, began on the west side of the Jordan and stretched across that river to the east, encompassing the territory of Manasseh (Numbers 32:33-42). As the name Decapolis indicates, originally the area contained ten cities, most of them having been built by followers of Alexander the great and rebuilt by the Romans. Near the beginning of his ministry, it was to Decapolis that Jesus went after he had cast demons out of two men and into a herd of swine in Gadara (Mark 5:20), and multitudes from Decapolis followed the Lord (Matthew 4:25).

### 1. THE PLIGHT OF MANKIND-DEAFNESS: Mark 7:31-32

The deafness of the man brought to Jesus pictures the spiritual condition of all humankind (Acts 28:27). How? Because, as

illustrated in this case, the deafness had serious ramifications in three areas.

### **A. Isolation**

Unlike the blind person who, although also isolated, could be communicated with, it was nearly impossible to communicate with a deaf person. Oral communication was impossible; written communication was slow and laborious; sign language was crude and inadequate. So a deaf person remained isolated from much in life in those times of no mass media and no science of lip reading or sign language.

Similarly, the unsaved person is deaf to God's word, though he has the ability to see God's revelation in nature (Psalm 19:1–6). But God's word is to him foolishness (1 Corinthians 2:14).

### **B. Ignorance**

Since he lived in a day before mass media communication, including books, this deaf man must have known very little about most areas of life. He would have known only what he could learn through sight. No television, no newspaper, no magazines, no encyclopedias, which today feed our minds, were available to him to read and thus to compensate for what he could not hear. He lived in intellectual darkness (Ephesians 4:18).

### **C. Inability**

In addition to being deaf, the man also had difficulty in speaking. Apparently, he could speak only in a stammering and unintelligible voice. Though not totally mute, he was practically so, for only when he was healed was he able to use his organs of speech properly (35). Similarly, the unsaved man cannot communicate with God. He makes sounds about religious interests, but that is all.

## **2. THE POWER OF THE MASTER—DELIVERANCE: Mark 7:33–37**

### **A. The Method of Deliverance—Contrary (Mk 7:33)**

Though the man's friends had specified the method they wanted the Lord to use (to lay his hands on him), Jesus did not tie himself to their wishes or to any one method. First, he separated the man from the crowd so as not to cater to their persistent desire to see a sign. Then he put his fingers into the man's ears and placed his own saliva on his tongue. Christ probably used this different method in order to show clearly that the power to heal proceeded from his person, and to encourage the man who could not hear anything that Christ might have spoken or prayed.

The lesson is clear: a method, however successful, may be inappropriate in some instances. We must deal with people as individuals, meeting their needs with a variety of methods.

### **B. The Motivation of Deliverance—Compassion (Mk 7:34)**

Our Lord gave a deep sigh. Luther is reported to have said, "This sigh was not drawn from Christ on account of the single tongue and ear of this poor man, but is a common sigh over all tongues and ears, yea over all hearts, bodies, and souls, and over all men from Adam to his last descendant." The next chapter records another occasion when Christ sighed over the people's desire to have a sign (Mark 8:12 where the verb is intensified). Sin causes believers to sigh today also, for we groan while waiting for the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23). Life in our present bodies produces groans (2 Corinthians 5:2, 4); disobedient church members cause their leaders to groan (Hebrews 13:17); and sin sometimes causes brothers to murmur or groan against each other (James 5:9). Sin and sighing go hand in hand.

As he groaned, the Lord looked up into heaven. Though the deaf man could not hear the sigh, he could see the Lord looking up—a sight that must have encouraged his faith. Then, in Aramaic, the Lord said, "Be opened."

### **C. The Manner of Deliverance—Complete (Mk 7:35–37)**

The cure was complete, for the man spoke in a right manner and his hearing was restored. But the Lord commanded that no one be told. Publicity would only impede his mission at that point. But the more he insisted, the more the crowd spread the news. They acknowledged that Christ did all things well, an echo of Genesis chapter 1, and that he was fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah 53:5–6. In other words, knowingly or unknowingly, the crowd was acknowledging that Jesus of Nazareth was the creator-messiah.

Today he is still doing all things well, even in this scene of sin (Romans 8:28). And one day he will reign over the earth and bring righteousness, healing, peace, and prosperity.

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### **I. What Were the Circumstances Behind the Healing of the Deaf and the Speech-Impaired Man?**

A. This incident followed Jesus' encounter with the Syrophenician mother and the casting out of the demon from her daughter (Mark 7:24–30).

B. On His way back to Galilee, the Lord passed through Sidon and went through the midst of the borders of Decapolis or Ten Cities (Mark 7:31).

C. As He arrived at the Sea of Galilee (before the feeding of the 4,000), some interested friends brought to Him a deaf and speech-impaired man to be healed.

D. As in the case of the paralyzed Jew (Mark 2:1–12; Matt. 9:1–8; Luke 5:17–26), Jesus responded to the faith of this helpless man's friends.

### **II. How Shall They Believe in Him of Whom They Have Not Heard?" (Rom. 10:14)**

A. Being deaf, this poor man was effectually cut off from salvation.

B. Because of his great affliction, his healing caused much admiration (Mark 7:37).

C. Another such miracle was recorded later by Mark when a demon-possessed deaf boy was also cured by Jesus (Mark 9:17–27).

D. Because such handicapped people were unable to hear, they were also unable to speak correctly. Therefore, this man could not even offer praise and prayer to God.

E. The verb meaning to hear, *akoúō*, in Greek also has the implied meaning of "obey" (*akoúōsin* Mark 6:11). Hearing is the beginning of understanding and believing which in turn leads to obedience.

F. Through the faith of friends, however, this man experienced Jesus' loving touch which heals not only physically (Matt. 8:3, 15; 9:18, 25; Mark 1:31, 41; 5:23, 41; 6:5; 8:23, 25; 9:27; Luke 5:13; 8:54; 13:13), but also spiritually (Mark 2:5, 9, 10).

### **III. How Did Jesus Affect the Cure?**

A. The deaf man's friends besought Jesus to put His hand upon him. He did, but not as expected. Probably they thought He would do it right then and there, publicly.

B. Instead, He took him aside from the multitude, probably to avoid publicity (Mark 7:36). Jesus did not want to be acclaimed as a political liberator of the Jews (John 6:15).

C. Just as Jesus was not uniform in His method of healing, so too His spiritual salvation is not uniform in its manner. Most of the time healing resulted from His word (Matt. 8:8, 16; Mark 2:11); but due to the man's deafness, Jesus also used touch, first the man's ears and then spitting and touching his tongue (Mark 7:33). For some, the words of salvation must be accompanied by perceived acts of love and kindness. Sometimes we lead the spiritually deaf to Jesus in this manner.

### **IV. Why Did Jesus Look Up to Heaven and Sigh?**

A. The man could see what Jesus was doing even though he could not hear. By His upward look, Jesus wanted to convey to the man the idea that what He was about to do was by divine power.

B. His sign also indicated that Jesus was compassionately human. Although the man could not hear His sigh, he could see His chest rising and falling, as well as the other visible expressions of His sorrow.

### **V. Jesus Then Spoke**

A. First he said the Aramaic word *Ephphatha*, be opened, which referred to the man's ears and mouth. The man immediately was able to hear and began to speak (Mark 7:35). Jesus spoke the word of command for the benefit of the few who were in private with Him (Mark 7:34).

B. He then told the witnesses of this miracle not to tell anybody, but they did so anyway (Mark 7:36). When we have been touched by Jesus or seen His salvation at work in another, it is almost impossible not to share our joy and excitement with others. Later, Jesus commanded His disciples to do just that (Acts 1:8).

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### **J C Ryle - Mark 7:31-37 - Healing of One Who was Deaf and Dumb**

THE first thing that demands our notice in these verses, is the mighty miracle which is here recorded. We read that they brought unto our Lord "one that was deaf and had an impediment in his speech," and besought him that He would "put His hand upon Him." At once the petition is granted, and the cure is wrought. Speech and hearing are instantaneously given to the man by a word and a touch. "Straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain."

We see but half the instruction of this passage, if we only regard it as an example of our Lord's divine power. It is such an example, beyond doubt, but it is something more than that. We must look further, deeper, and lower than the surface, and we shall find in the passage precious spiritual truths.



Here we are meant to see our Lord's power to heal the spiritually deaf. He can give the chief of sinners a hearing ear. He can make him delight in listening to the very Gospel which he once ridiculed and despised.

Here also we are meant to see our Lord's power to heal the spiritually dumb. He can teach the hardest of transgressors to call upon God. He can put a new song in the mouth of him whose talk was once only of this world. He can make the vilest of men speak of spiritual things, and testify the Gospel of the grace of God.

When Jesus pours forth His Spirit, nothing is impossible. We must never despair of others. We must never regard our own hearts as too bad to be changed. He that healed the deaf and dumb still lives. The cases which moral philosophy pronounces hopeless, are not incurable if they are brought to Christ.

The second thing which demands our notice in these verses, is the peculiar manner in which our Lord thought good to work the miracle here recorded. We are told that when the deaf and dumb person was brought to Jesus, "He took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit and touched his tongue; and looking up to heaven, he sighed,"—and then, and not till then, came the words of commanding power, "Ephphatha, that is, be opened."

There is undoubtedly much that is mysterious in these actions. We know not why they were used. It would have been as easy to our Lord to speak the word, and command health to return at once, as to do what He here did. His reasons for the course He adopted are not recorded. We only know that the result was the same as on other occasions;—the man was cured.

But there is one simple lesson to be learned from our Lord's conduct on this occasion. That lesson is, that Christ was not tied to the use of any one means in doing His works among men. Sometimes He thought fit to work in one way, sometimes in another. His enemies were never able to say, that unless He employed certain invariable agency He could not work at all.

We see the same thing going on still in the Church of Christ. We see continual proof that the Lord is not tied to the use of any one means exclusively in conveying grace to the soul. Sometimes He is pleased to work by the word preached publicly, sometimes by the word read privately. Sometimes He awakens people by sickness and affliction, sometimes by the rebukes or counsel of friends. Sometimes He employs means of grace to turn people out of the way of sin. Sometimes He arrests their attention by some providence, without any means of grace at all. He will not have any means of grace made an idol and exalted, to the disparagement of other means. He will not have any means despised as useless, and neglected as of no value. All are good and valuable. All are in their turn employed for the same great end, the conversion of souls. All are in the hands of Him who "giveth not account of His matters," and knows best which to use, in each separate case that He heals.

The last thing which demands our notice in these verses, is the remarkable testimony which was borne by those who saw the miracle here recorded. They said of our Lord, "He hath done all things well!"

It is more than probable that those who said these words were little sensible of their full meaning, when applied to Christ. Like Caiaphas, they "spoke not of themselves." (John 11:51.) But the truth to which they gave utterance is full of deep and unspeakable comfort, and ought to be daily remembered by all true Christians.

Let us remember it as we look back over the days past of our lives, from the hour of our conversion. "Our Lord hath done all things well." In first bringing us out of darkness into marvellous light,—in humbling us and teaching us our weakness, guilt, and folly,—in stripping us of our idols, and choosing all our portions,—in placing us where we are, and giving us what we have,—how well everything has been done! How great the mercy that we have not had our own way!

Let us remember it as we look forward to the days yet to come. We know not what they may be, bright or dark, many or few. But we know that we are in the hands of Him who "doeth all things well." He will not err in any of his dealings with us. He will take away and give,—He will afflict and bereave,—He will move and He will settle, with perfect wisdom, at the right time, in the right way. The great Shepherd of the sheep makes no mistakes. He leads every lamb of His flock by the right way to the city of habitation.

We shall never see the full beauty of these words till the resurrection morning. We shall then look back over our lives, and know the meaning of everything that happened from first to last. We shall remember all the way by which we were led, and confess that all was "well done." The why and the wherefore, the causes and the reasons of every thing which now perplexes, will be clear and plain as the sun at noon-day. We shall wonder at our own past blindness, and marvel that we could ever have doubted our Lord's love. "Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now we know in part, but then shall we know even as we are known."\* (1 Cor. 13:13.)

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**Robert Morgan - Borrow** [From this verse : 365 inspiring stories about the power of God's word](#) - **Mark 7:31-37** Finishing His Chapter

It sometimes takes a while for young people to find their way.

Consider Thomas. At 16, he wanted to be a teacher, but soon changed his mind. He next decided to seek his fortune in the West Indies, but aborted plans just before boarding ship. He then tried one thing after another, but couldn't find his niche. Traveling down to London, he drifted around town looking for work and finding none. Giving his last coin to a beggar, he was reduced to poverty himself.

But Thomas Nelson was a Christian, born to praying Scottish parents, and the Lord brought news to his ears about a job as a publisher's apprentice on Paternoster Row. Nelson checked it out, and there he found his calling. He had always loved Christian books, and now he discovered pleasure in printing them. He started weekly Bible clubs in London, thus sharing the gospel by both print and voice. He prospered and soon saved enough to return to Edinburgh to open a used bookshop. Soon he was publishing his own materials, aiming them toward the masses, seeking to provide affordable Christian literature for an eager and expanding market.

Eventually his teenage sons joined the business, and by 1853 Thomas Nelson and Sons had become the largest publishing house in Scotland. The next year, Thomas, Jr. sailed to New York to open an office there, making Nelson the first British publisher to establish a branch in America.

Today, over 200 years later, Thomas Nelson is the largest publisher of Bibles and Christian literature in the world. Not bad for a boy who had trouble finding his way.

It's no wonder that when he learned in 1861 that he was dying, Nelson was unruffled. "I thought so," he said. "My days are wholly in God's hands. He doeth all things well. His will be done!"

Then picking up the Bible by his bed, he said, "Now I must finish my chapter."

**Mark 7:32 They brought to Him one who was deaf and spoke with difficulty, and they implored Him to lay His hand on him.**

NET Mark 7:32 They brought to him a deaf man who had difficulty speaking, and they asked him to place his hands on him.

NLT Mark 7:32 A deaf man with a speech impediment was brought to him, and the people begged Jesus to lay his hands on the man to heal him.

ESV Mark 7:32 And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.

NIV Mark 7:32 There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged him to place his hand on the man.

GNT Mark 7:32 καὶ φρουσιν αὐτὸν κωφὸν καὶ μογιλάλον καὶ παρακαλοῦσιν αὐτὸν νὰ πῇ αὐτὸν χεῖρα.

KJV Mark 7:32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

ASV Mark 7:32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to lay his hand upon him.

CSB Mark 7:32 They brought to Him a deaf man who also had a speech difficulty, and begged Jesus to lay His hand on him.

NKJ Mark 7:32 Then they brought to Him one who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech, and they begged Him to put His hand on him.

NRS Mark 7:32 They brought to him a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech; and they begged him to lay his hand on him.

YLT Mark 7:32 and they bring to him a deaf, stuttering man, and they call on him that he may put the hand on him.

- Mt 9:32,33 Lu 11:14
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FOR DEAF MAN

**They brought to Him one who was deaf ([kophos](#)) and spoke with difficulty ([mogilalos](#))** - They is not identified but this certainly reminds one of the 4 who brought the lame man to Jesus in Mark 2:3+. And just as with the paralytic who could not have come to Jesus on his own, this deaf/mute man could not have pleaded with intelligible speech for Jesus to heal him. But he had some good friends who **implored** for him.

It is notable that the adjective **mogilalos** is used one other time in the Septuagint of Isaiah 35:6+ which is a clear description of the glorious Messianic Age -- "Then the lame will leap like a deer, And **the tongue of the mute will shout for joy**. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah."

**MacDonald** writes that this infirmed man "pictures the sinner, deaf to the voice of God and therefore unable to speak to others about Him."

**And they implored Him to lay His hand on him** - In contrast to the 4 men who had brought the paralytic in Mark 4, these men actually intercede on behalf of the deaf man with a speech impediment, which may have kept the man from beseeching Jesus directly. In desperation they pled on the man who could not speak for himself, **Implored** is in the [present tense](#) which is the [historical present](#) (as is the preceding verb **brought**) which "stresses the helpless plight of the deaf mute and the urgency with which the people who bring him ask Jesus to lay his hand on him. The sorrier the plight and the greater the urgency, the more powerful an effect on the audience when they learn of the healing." (Gundry) The deaf mute's friends made persistent pleas like the Syrophenician woman had done.

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**Spoke with difficulty** (ESV = speech impediment) is the word **mogilalos** ([3424](#)) (**mógis** = with difficulty + **laleo** = to speak) used only here in the NT (but see only other use of **mogilalos** in Isaiah 35 [below](#)) and describes one who has great difficulty communicating with articulate and comprehensible speech. It is interesting that in Mark 9:25 Jesus commanded a "deaf and mute spirit" to come out. There is no evidence that this man's infirmity is anything but physical (whether congenital or acquired is not stated).

**Deaf** ([2974](#))(**kophos** from **kopto** = to cut down) literally means blunted or dull (as a weapon), but in the NT meaning unable to speak, speechless. (Mt. 9:32, 33; 12:22; 15:30, 31; Lk 1:22; 11:14) but also means (as in the present context) lack of hearing capability, Ex 4:11; Is 43:8; Ps 37:14; Mt 11:5; Mk 7:32, 37; 9:25; Lk 7:22 Mt 11:5; Lk 7:22.

**Implore** ([3870](#))(**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action.

**Lay** ([2007](#)) (**epitithemi** from **epi** = upon + **tithemi** = to place, put) means literally to place or put upon, to lay upon. **Epitithemi** as in this passage was frequently used of laying on of hands (20 of 40 uses), Jesus laying His hand on to heal (Mk 5:23+, Mk 6:5+; Mk 7:32; Mk 8:23,25+ = a blind man; Mt. 9:18; Mt. 19:13, 15; Mk 8:25; Lk 4:40; 13:13; Acts 9:12; 28:8) and also of Jesus laying His hand on to bless (Mt 19:13).

**Mark 7:33 Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva;**

NET Mark 7:33 After Jesus took him aside privately, away from the crowd, he put his fingers in the man's ears, and after spitting, he touched his tongue.

NLT Mark 7:33 Jesus led him away from the crowd so they could be alone. He put his fingers into the man's ears. Then, spitting on his own fingers, he touched the man's tongue.

ESV Mark 7:33 And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue.

NIV Mark 7:33 After he took him aside, away from the crowd, Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue.

GNT Mark 7:33 καὶ λαβὼν αὐτὸν πρὸς τὸν ἑαυτοῦ ὅτι βάλεν τὸς δακτύλους αὐτοῦ εἰς τὰ αὐτοῦ καὶ πταύσας ψαύσας τὸν ὅτι σπινθηρᾷ αὐτόν,

KJV Mark 7:33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and

touched his tongue;

ASV Mark 7:33 And he took him aside from the multitude privately, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat, and touched his tongue;

CSB Mark 7:33 So He took him away from the crowd privately. After putting His fingers in the man's ears and spitting, He touched his tongue.

NKJ Mark 7:33 And He took him aside from the multitude, and put His fingers in his ears, and He spat and touched his tongue.

NRS Mark 7:33 He took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue.

YLT Mark 7:33 And having taken him away from the multitude by himself, he put his fingers to his ears, and having spit, he touched his tongue,

- **he took:** Mk 5:40 8:23 1Ki 17:19-22 2Ki 4:4-6,33,34 Joh 9:6,7
- [Mark 7:33, 34 The Pattern of Service](#) - Alexander Maclaren
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself - Took aside** is [apolambano](#) in the [middle voice](#) picturing Jesus taking the man to Himself and to another place, drawing him aside privately.

**Wuest on aside** - The word "aside" is the translation of kat' idian (κατ' ἰδίαν), the latter word speaking of privacy.

**Brian Bill** - Jesus makes the unreached a priority and He also ministers in private so there would be no distractions. Notice the first part of Mark 7:33: "And taking him aside from the crowd privately..." This would help the man be less self-conscious and was a way that Jesus demonstrated the dignity of the disabled. In Mark 8:23 Jesus did something similar for another man with a disability: "And He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village..." When the hypocritical religious leaders brought a woman caught in adultery to Jesus, Jesus waited until each of them left before talking to her in private. One of my favorite verses is found in Matthew 12:20, which is a quote from Isaiah 42: "A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out." Are you allowing Jesus to minister to you in private? While it's essential to gather in a large group and to also plug into a Growth Group, it's critical to have private time with Jesus every day in His Word and in prayer. Jesus touches personally. Jesus ministered privately to this man and He also personally touched Him as we see in the second half of Mark 7:33: "...He put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue." This was an early form of simple sign language. ([Mark 7:31-37 Open Ears and Unleashed Tongues](#))

**And put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva** Jesus did something completely new to catch this man's attention because He could not catch his attention with words. It is almost like He was performing sign language by focusing on ears and tongue.

**Wuest on put** - The verb is ballō "to throw," here, "to thrust." He put one finger of His right hand into one ear, and one finger of His left hand into the other. He spat and touched his tongue. The deaf person could not hear anything our Lord would say, and He took this means of arresting his attention and encouraging his faith. Mark gives us no explanation of the particular meaning of the acts to the first-century person.

**Akin** - Jesus takes the man aside in privacy. His attention is personal and compassionate. Entering the man's world our Lord uses "sign language" he could understand (read vv. 33-34). Sinclair Ferguson summarizes well what our Lord is doing, *The man could not hear Jesus and he was also incapable of verbal communication. So Jesus „spoke" to him in the language he could understand—sign-language--.* *The fingers placed in his ears and then removed meant, "I am going to remove the blockage in your hearing."* *The spitting and the touching of the man's tongue meant, "I am going to remove the blockage in your mouth."* *The glance up to heaven meant, "It is God alone who is able to do this for you."* *Jesus wanted the man to understand that it was not magic but God's grace that healed him* (Let's Study Mark, 114).

**Swete** makes a fascinating comment that "The recovery of hearing by the deaf was a note of the **Messianic Age** (Isa. 35:5, Isa 42:18), and had accompanied the Ministry in Galilee (Mt. 11:5). In this case deafness was attended by such an impediment in the speech that the man was practically dumb." ([Mark Commentary Main Page heavy on Greek](#))

Isaiah 35:4-6+ Say to those with anxious heart, "Take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance; The recompense of God will come, But He will save you." 5 Then (WHEN? WHEN HE COMES WITH VENGEANCE) the eyes of the blind will be opened And the ears of **the deaf** (Hebrew = cheresh = deaf; Lxx = [kophos](#) = same adjective used in Mk 7:32,37!) **will be unstopped**. 6 Then the lame will leap like a deer,

And **the tongue of the mute** (Hebrew = illem = mute, unable to speak; Lxx = [mogilalos](#) - same word used in Mk 7:32!) will shout for joy. For waters will break forth in the wilderness And streams in the Arabah.

[Guzik](#) has an interesting note - Jesus used many different ways of healing. He healed with a word, healed without a word, healed in response to one's faith, healed in response to the faith of another, healed those who asked, and healed those He approached. Jesus didn't want to be tied down to any "one method" to show that His power was not dependent on any method but on the sovereign power of God.

**G Campbell Morgan** - "He adapts His method to the peculiar circumstances of need of the one with whom He is dealing. I am quite convinced if we could perfectly know these men we should discover the reason for the method. In each case Christ adapted Himself to the need of the man."

**John MacArthur** has a most interesting comment on the details of this miracle - In an act of profound kindness, the Lord began to communicate in sign language, using gestures and nonverbal signals. Jesus used four specific signs to make His point. First, He put His fingers into both of his ears to indicate that He recognized the man's physical problem. Jesus understood that he was not stunted mentally or possessed by demons, as some may have thought; he simply could not hear. The Lord used a symbolic gesture to demonstrate that He had rightly diagnosed the medical issue. Second, after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva. Jesus again employed a physical gesture to identify the man's speech disability. Though Jesus used saliva in His healings on two other occasions (cf. Mark 8:23; John 9:6), it obviously had no power. However, ancient people generally believed that saliva had healing properties. The deaf man would have understood that Jesus' use of saliva meant He intended to heal him. Third, looking up to heaven, Jesus demonstrated that the creative power He exercised came from God. Even as a pagan, the man would have understood what Jesus meant by gazing toward heaven. Fourth, by giving a deep sigh, the Lord communicated a sincere sympathy for the long agonies of this man's disability. An honest groaning visibly projected pain and heartache on the man's behalf. So, using nonverbal communication, the Lord Jesus taught this man about both God's power and His compassion. The Son of God would heal him, with power that came from above, because He cared deeply about him. (MNTC-Mk)

**TSK Note on put His fingers...** - This was clearly a symbolical action; for these remedies evidently could not, by their natural efficacy, avail to produce so wonderful an effect. As the ears of the deaf appear closed, he applies his fingers to intimate that he would open them; and as the tongue of the dumb seems to be tied, or to cleave to the palate, he touches it, to intimate he would give loose and free motion to it. He accommodated himself to the weakness of those who might not indeed doubt his power, but fancy some external sign was requisite to healing. It was also thus made manifest, that this salutiferous power came from Himself, and that He who by one word, [ephphatha <Strong's G2188>] had healed the man, must be Divine.

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#### Question - [Why did Jesus spit for some of His miracles?](#)

**Answer:** Near Decapolis, some people brought Jesus a deaf man who could hardly talk. Jesus healed the man, of course, but in an interesting manner: "Jesus put his fingers into the man's ears. Then he spit and touched the man's tongue" (Mark 7:33). Later, in the town of Bethsaida, Jesus healed a blind man. Again, the miracle was preceded by spitting: "He . . . spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him" (Mark 8:23). To heal a man born blind, Jesus "spit on the ground, made some mud with the saliva, and put it on the man's eyes" (John 9:6).

Certainly, Jesus, the divine Son of God, does not need physical props to work miracles. In many cases, Jesus merely spoke, and healing followed (e.g., Matthew 15:28; Luke 17:12-14). Yet, in three cases, Jesus used His spittle in the process of healing.

One possible reason for Jesus' use of His saliva has to do with the beliefs of His contemporary culture. Several Roman writers and Jewish rabbis considered saliva to be a valid treatment for blindness. Since the people of that day had a high view of saliva's healing properties, Jesus used spit to communicate His intention to heal. Those being healed would have naturally interpreted Jesus' spitting as a sign that they would soon be cured.

The greater need of each of those healed was the need for increased faith. Jesus recognized this spiritual need and offered a physical action as a means of raising their expectations and focusing their faith on Himself. Thus, in Mark 8, the man's spiritual sight was strengthened even as physical sight was imparted to him.

It is possible that Jesus' use of mud in John 9 was meant to parallel God's original creation of man: "The LORD God formed the man from the dust of the ground" (Genesis 2:7). In other words, Jesus showed His power as the Creator by imitating the original creation of man: He used the "dust of the ground" to give the man born blind new sight. The creative power of Jesus' miracle was not lost on the man who was healed: "Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing" (John 9:32-33, NKJV).

Jesus healed many people in His ministry; in fact, there was no sickness or infirmity that He could not heal (Matthew 4:23).

Significantly, the details of each miracle vary slightly. Jesus never healed the same way twice. The variety of methods used by the Lord eliminates confidence in any one technique or *modus operandi*. Healing is not the product of any talisman, amulet, spell, or process. Healing comes from the power of God.

When Jesus healed, with or without spit, the response was usually something like this: "This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'" (Mark 2:12). (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

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### **Streams in the Desert - "And he took him aside from the multitude." (Mark 7:33.)**

PAUL not only stood the tests in Christian activity, but in the solitude of captivity. You may stand the strain of the most intense labor, coupled with severe suffering, and yet break down utterly when laid aside from all religious activities; when forced into close confinement in some prison house.

That noble bird, soaring the highest above the clouds and enduring the longest flights, sinks into despair when in a cage where it is forced to beat its helpless wings against its prison bars. You have seen the great eagle languish in its narrow cell with bowed head and drooping wings. What a picture of the sorrow of inactivity.

Paul in prison. That was another side of life. Do you want to see how he takes it? I see him looking out over the top of his prison wall and over the heads of his enemies. I see him write a document and sign his name—not the prisoner of Festus, nor of Caesar; not the victim of the Sanhedrin; but the—"prisoner of the Lord." He saw only the hand of God in it all. To him the prison becomes a palace. Its corridors ring with shouts of triumphant praise and joy.

Restrained from the missionary work he loved so well, he now built a new pulpit—a new witness stand—and from that place of bondage come some of the sweetest and most helpful ministries of Christian liberty. What precious messages of light come from those dark shadows of captivity.

Think of the long train of imprisoned saints who have followed in Paul's wake. For twelve long years Bunyan's lips were silenced in Bedford jail. It was there that he did the greatest and best work of his life. There he wrote the book that has been read next to the Bible. He says, "I was at home in prison and I sat me down and wrote, and wrote, for joy did make me write."

The wonderful dream of that long night has lighted the pathway of millions of weary pilgrims. That sweet-spirited French lady, Madam Guyon, lay long between prison walls. Like some caged birds that sing the sweeter for their confinement, the music of her soul has gone out far beyond the dungeon walls and scattered the desolation of many drooping hearts.

Oh, the heavenly consolation that has poured forth from places of solitude!—S. C. Rees.

"Taken aside by Jesus,  
To feel the touch of His hand;  
To rest for a while in the shadow  
Of the Rock in a weary land.

"Taken aside by Jesus,  
In the loneliness dark and drear,  
Where no other comfort may reach me,  
Than His voice to my heart so dear.

"Taken aside by Jesus,  
To be quite alone with Him,  
To hear His wonderful tones of love  
'Mid the silence and shadows dim.

"Taken aside by Jesus,  
Shall I shrink from the desert place;  
When I hear as I never heard before,  
And see Him 'face to face'?"

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**Mark 7:34 and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!"**

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NET Mark 7:34 Then he looked up to heaven and said with a sigh, "Ephphatha" (that is, "Be opened").



NLT Mark 7:34 Looking up to heaven, he sighed and said, "Ephphatha," which means, "Be opened!"

ESV Mark 7:34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

NIV Mark 7:34 He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, "Ephphatha!" (which means, "Be opened!").

GNT Mark 7:34 καὶ ἀναβλέψας εἰς τὸ οὐρανὸν ὁ ἰησοῦς ἔφη, Ἐφφαθα, ὅτι, Διάνοχθητι.

KJV Mark 7:34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

ASV Mark 7:34 and looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

CSB Mark 7:34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed deeply and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!").

NKJ Mark 7:34 Then, looking up to heaven, He sighed, and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

NRS Mark 7:34 Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened."

YLT Mark 7:34 and having looked to the heaven, he sighed, and saith to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be thou opened;'

- **looking:** Mk 6:41 Joh 11:41 17:1
- **he sighed:** Mk 8:12 Isa 53:3 Eze 21:6,7 Lu 19:41 Joh 11:33,35,38 Heb 4:15
- **Ephphatha:** Mk 5:41 15:34
- **Be opened:** Mk 1:41 Lu 7:14 18:42 Joh 11:43 Ac 9:34,40
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**and looking up to heaven** - **Looking up** is [anablepo](#) which Mark had used earlier in Mark 6:41+ when Jesus "took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food." Clearly He is communicating with His Father in Heaven. Remember they are in private. Jesus wanted this man to know where the source of power and healing comes from. This recalls the words of the Psalm 123:1+ "A Song of Ascents. To You I lift up my eyes, O You who are enthroned in the heavens! "

**Brian Bill** adds that "Jesus is demonstrating prayerful dependence as He did many times in the gospels. When He took the five loaves and two fish, Mark 6:41 says, "He looked up to heaven and said a blessing..." Before raising Lazarus from the dead, John 11:41 records: "And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, 'Father, I thank you that you have heard me.'" And in John 17:1 Jesus begins His prayer this way: "He lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said, 'Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you.'" When people spend time with you, does their perspective change because they see you looking up? Are you pointing people to God or to the garbage around them?

**With a deep sigh** - Normally to sigh mean to draw in a deep breath and exhale. Surely in part this expressed His grief over the suffering which sin has brought on mankind.

**Akin** - .I believe this display of emotion, something we do not often see in Mark, is an expression of our Lord's love and compassion for this man and also His great grief over the Fall of man and the terrible consequences of sin. It is the sigh of God over a broken creation.

**Brian Bill** - Jesus is not distant from our discouragement but comes close with His compassion. We see this in the phrase found in the middle of Mark 7:34: "He sighed..." The Greek word here was used of the snorting of a horse, which helps us see that Jesus was really broken up by this man's misery. Aren't you glad that we have a Savior who sympathizes with our sorrows? Psalm 34:18: "The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit." Hebrews 4:15: "For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin." One day a boy came home from school looking really sad. His mom asked him what was wrong and her son said his friend Billy's dad had died. He told his mom that Billy was so upset that he cried and cried all day. The mother asked her son what he did when he saw his friend crying. He replied, "I just laid my head on my desk and cried with him." He was living out Romans 12:15: "Weep with those who weep." Oh, that we would have tender hearts and tears in our eyes when we're with people in pain! Before moving on, let me point out that compassion comes out of communion with the Father. If your heart is hard, spend time with God in prayer. One prayer that I often pray is this: "God, break my heart for what breaks your heart."

**Stork** - Too often we sigh and look within: Jesus sighed and looked without. We sigh, and look down; Jesus sighed, and looked up. We sigh, and look to earth; Jesus sighed, and looked to heaven. We sigh, and look to man; Jesus sighed, and looked to God!

**Warren Wiersbe** - "The 'sigh' was an inward groan, our Lord's compassionate response to the pain and sorrow sin has brought into

the world. It was also a prayer to the Father on behalf of the handicapped man. (The same word is used in connection with prayer in Romans 8:23, and the noun in Romans 8:26)."

**Deep sign** (groan) (4727)(**stenazo** from **stenos** = narrow or contracted as when one is squeezed or pressed by circumstances) literally describes an internal squeezing and denotes a feeling of sorrow which is internal. It means to sigh or groan either inwardly to ourselves or outwardly because of undesirable circumstances or oppression under which the individual suffers. Stenazo means to express grief by inarticulate or semi-articulate sounds. A groan is an audible expression of anguish due to physical, emotional, or spiritual pain. All 6 NT uses - Mk. 7:34; Ro. 8:23; 2 Co. 5:2; 2 Co. 5:4; Heb. 13:17; Jas. 5:9 - complain(1), deep sigh(1), grief(1), groan(3).

2 Corinthians 5:2, 4 For indeed in this house we groan, longing to be clothed with our dwelling from heaven,...For indeed while we are in this tent, we groan, being burdened, because we do not want to be unclothed but to be clothed, so that what is mortal will be swallowed up by life.

Romans 8:23 And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.

**He said to him, "Ephphatha!" that is, "Be opened!"** - Ephphatha is an Aramaic word which Mark translates for us as **"be opened"** a command in the [aorist imperative](#) calling for this to take place immediately.

**Be opened** (1272)(**dianoigo** from **dia** = through, between, used here as an intensive + **anoigo** = to open, remove that which obstructs) means to open completely that which was closed (open wide, like "double folding doors" or as when Stephen in his last moments before martyrdom saw "the heavens **opened** up" Acts 7:56). **Dianoigo** can speak of opening one's understanding to what before had been hidden or closed to their intellect. To open the sense of Scripture and thus to *explain* the Scripture. To thoroughly disclose or cause one to thoroughly understand. All NT uses - Mk. 7:34; Lk. 2:23; Lk. 24:31; Lk. 24:32; Lk. 24:45; Acts 7:56; Acts 16:14; Acts 17:3

**Mark 7:35 And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed, and he began speaking plainly.**

NET Mark 7:35 And immediately the man's ears were opened, his tongue loosened, and he spoke plainly.

NLT Mark 7:35 Instantly the man could hear perfectly, and his tongue was freed so he could speak plainly!

ESV Mark 7:35 And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

NIV Mark 7:35 At this, the man's ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

GNT Mark 7:35 κα [ε θ ως] νο γησαν α το α κοα , κα λθη δεσμς τς γλσσης α το κα λλει ρθς.

KJV Mark 7:35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

ASV Mark 7:35 And his ears were opened, and the bond of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

CSB Mark 7:35 Immediately his ears were opened, his speech difficulty was removed, and he began to speak clearly.

NKJ Mark 7:35 Immediately his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was loosed, and he spoke plainly.

NRS Mark 7:35 And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly.

YLT Mark 7:35 and immediately were his ears opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he was speaking plain.

- Mk 2:12 Ps 33:9 Isa 32:3,4 35:5,6 Mt 11:5
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**IMMEDIATE  
HEALING**

**And his ears were opened, and the impediment of his tongue was removed** - Opened is in the divine passive. **Impediment** is *desmos* (see below) which literally means a bond, so that it was as if his tongue had been imprisoned and was immediately set free with Jesus' command "Be opened." Removed is *luo* which is used figuratively here meaning in essence to untie his tongue (we often speak of a person being "tongue-tied").

**Akin** - The language of the original text is quite vivid and descriptive, "and were opened his ears, and immediately were loosened the bond (chains) of his tongue." Like a prisoner bound in chains, Jesus broke the fetters of his captivity and set him free.

**Opened** (455) ([anoigo](#) - [click for discussion of all the NT uses of this great verb](#) from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to open again, to give access to. To open one's eyes causing them to see (Acts 26:18). To open one's mouth that they might begin to speak (Mt 5:2). Figuratively, to open a "door" meaning to make possible (Col 4:3). Luke records the parallel passages (Lk 11:9, 10). Of heavens open = have the heavens opened or divided so that celestial things become manifest - Mt 3:16; Lu 3:21; Jn 1:51; Acts 7:56; 10:11; Rev 19:11; (Lxx of the following passages) Isa 64:1; Ezek 1:1; Ps 78:23. In 2 Cor 6:11 the idea is to pour out one's mind, open one's heart, to speak fully and frankly. **Anoigo** is used in NT and Lxx of Jesus not opening His mouth - Not to open one's mouth = not to utter complaints (Acts 8:32; Isa 53:7 cp Ps 38:14; 39:9)

**Impediment** (1199) (*desmos*) is literally bond, fetter; plural *Friberg* - "by metonymy imprisonment, prison (Phil 1:7); figuratively, as an impediment or binding condition causing physical disability tongue-tied condition (Mk 7:35); crippled condition (Lk 13:16). **Desmos** - 18x in 18v - bond(1), bonds(3), chains(3), impediment(1), imprisonment(10). - Mk. 7:35; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 13:16; Acts 16:26; Acts 20:23; Acts 23:29; Acts 26:29; Acts 26:31; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:13; Phil. 1:14; Phil. 1:17; Col. 4:18; 2 Tim. 2:9; Phlm. 1:10; Phlm. 1:13; Heb. 11:36; Jude 1:6

**Removed** (loosed, untied, unbound) (3089) (*luo*) means to loose, release, dissolve. Most of the uses in Mark are literal untying - Mk. 1:7+ = "untie the thong of His sandals"; Mk. 7:35+; Mk. 11:2 = of colt Jesus would enter Jerusalem on = "untie it and bring it"; Mk. 11:4 = "they \*untied it."; Mk. 11:5 = "untying the colt"; e. This word means to set free what is bound and possibly here pictures the world being set free from the corruption that exists because of sin (Ro 8:21+). Rev. 1:5+ = Jesus has "released us from our sins by His blood." The elements shall be loosened and broken up into their component parts, like a building being torn down. The physical structure of the present world will disintegrate. This picture is the very opposite of the consistency claimed by the mockers in (2Pe 3:5+). **Summary of luo: Literally** to untie something (colt = Mt 21:2, Mk 1:7+, Lk 3:16+, Lk 13:16+, Jn 1:27+ = sandal thong, man [Lazarus] wrapped in bandages = Jn 11:44 = "Unbind him, and let him go."), break the seals of a scroll (Re 5:2 - secular use described "broken seals of a will", or "of the opening of a document" or "a letter"), release from prison (Ac 22:30+ cp release of angels and/or the devil = Re 9:14, 15+, Rev 20:3, 7+). **Figuratively:** to destroy (temple [Jesus' body - so referring to death in this case by crucifixion], Jn 2:19), to break a "rule" (Sabbath, Jn 5:18, 7:23), to annul (commandment, Mt 5:19+, Scripture, Jn 10:35), set free from a bond (by Satan = Lk 13:16+), cause something to cease (put an end to, death Ac 2:24+, How? By the resurrection), breaking up a group of people meeting (Ac 13:43+), break up some object (ship's stern, Ac 27:41+), release from marriage (1Co 7:27), break down a spiritual barrier (Ep 2:14+), to destroy (the heavens and earth, 2Pe 3:10, 11, 12+), destroy the works of the devil (1 Jn 3:8+ -Apostolic fathers write "consequently all magic and every kind of spell were **dissolved** [*luo*]" and "his destructiveness **comes to an end**"), release from bondage to our sins (Re 1:5+).

**And he began speaking plainly** - He immediately began to speak correctly = normally ('properly') . This was another miracle for he did so without needing speech therapy. He understood words (and other sound) without any training or practice! **Speaking** is in the vivid [imperfect tense](#). One can picture him **speaking** over and over as he relished the miraculous gift of speech given by Jesus!

**MacArthur** - In an instant, the One who created the world (John 1:1-3), and upholds it with "the word of His power" (Heb. 1:3), supernaturally enabled this man to hear and speak fluently. Like every miracle Jesus performed, this healing was an act of divine creative energy through His word, the same way He made the universe in the beginning (cf. Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24, 26).

**Plainly** (3723) (*orthós*) from *orthos* 3717 = right, straight, correct; English orthopedics - straight bones; orthodoxy - correct doctrine) means rightly, , plainly, straight, in the right way. BDAG = pert. to acting in conformity with a norm or standard, *Orthos* is used most often in the NT in a figurative moral/ethical sense - twice by Jesus and once by His hypocritical enemies (Lk 7:43; Lk 10:28; Lk 20:21).

**Mark 7:36 And He gave them orders not to tell anyone; but the more He ordered them, the more widely they continued to**

Wuest And He in His own interest commanded them to be saying not even one thing. But the more He kept on commanding them, they themselves kept on proclaiming it publicly so much the more to a greater degree.

NET Mark 7:36 Jesus ordered them not to tell anything. But as much as he ordered them not to do this, they proclaimed it all the more.

NLT Mark 7:36 Jesus told the crowd not to tell anyone, but the more he told them not to, the more they spread the news.

ESV Mark 7:36 And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

NIV Mark 7:36 Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it.

GNT Mark 7:36 καὶ διεστὲ λατὸς αὐτοῦ νὰ μὴδὲν λῶσιν· σὺν δὲ αὐτοῦ διεστ' ἄλλετο, αὐτοὶ μᾶλλον περισσῶς κ' ῥυσσον.

KJV Mark 7:36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it;

ASV Mark 7:36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it.

CSB Mark 7:36 Then He ordered them to tell no one, but the more He would order them, the more they would proclaim it.

NKJ Mark 7:36 Then He commanded them that they should tell no one; but the more He commanded them, the more widely they proclaimed it.

NRS Mark 7:36 Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one; but the more he ordered them, the more zealously they proclaimed it.

YLT Mark 7:36 And he charged them that they may tell no one, but the more he was charging them, the more abundantly they were proclaiming it,

- Mk 1:44,45 3:12 5:43 8:26
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**And He gave them orders ([diastello](#)) not to tell anyone** - Now he had drawn the man aside privately but here he gives orders to THEM. This could be the healed man and his friends. Or this could be the healed man coming to the multitude and their seeing the incredible miracle that had transpired. And the irony is that this command to not tell include the man who now had the ability to speak for the first time in his life!

**Gave orders** is "is in the middle voice, showing the charge was given with the personal interest of Jesus in view. It was for His sake and the future welfare of His ministry, that the command was given." (Wuest)

**Gave orders** (1291) ([diastello](#) from **dia** = [asunder](#), intensifies + **stello** = to send) means to send through referring to giving an explicit command that is unambiguously, unmistakably clear. It means to set forth distinctly, to command. **Diastello** is a stronger verb than [entellomai](#) (to command) as we see here in Mk 7:36 where Jesus "**gave** them **orders** not to tell anyone (that He had healed a deaf man)." **BDAG** - to "define or express in no uncertain terms what one must do" and so to give strict orders (Heb 12:20). When **diastello** is followed by a negative it means to prohibit or forbid (Mt 16:20, Mark 5:43; 7:36; 8:15; 9:9; ). It is used 8x in the NT only in the middle voice

**but the more He ordered ([diastello](#)) them, the more** (KJV = so much the more) **widely they continued to proclaim it** - Jesus repeatedly ordered ( [imperfect tense](#)) telling them again and again not to tell! The more Jesus said "No," the more they said "We will." Isn't that just like the flesh? Put a law in front of the eyes of my fallen flesh and what do I want to do but break it!!! **Robertson** adds "Human nature is a peculiar thing. The command not to tell provoked these people to tell just as the leper had done (Mark 1:44f.). The more Jesus commanded (hoson autois diastelleto) them not to tell the more they told. It was a continuous performance. Prohibitions always affect some people that way, especially superficial and light-headed folks. But we have to have prohibitions or anarchy."

So they continued to **proclaim** (made public proclamation) in the vivid [imperfect tense](#) picturing them telling it over and over throughout the region. So here in the region of Decapolis, the miraculous casting out of the demon of the Gadarene demoniac was to be broadcast, but now the miracle is to be muted (see [note below](#) on "Messianic Secret")! (Mark 5:19-20+)

**Robertson on the more** (KJV - so much more) - Double comparative as occurs elsewhere for emphasis as in Phil. 1:23 "much more better" (πολλὸν μᾶλλον κρείσσειν [pollōi mallon kreisson]).

**MacArthur** - One might wonder why Jesus instructed the former demoniac to spread the news about Him throughout the region of Decapolis and later told the former deaf man to keep quiet. There was an important difference. The former demoniac was the first missionary to that Gentile area. But now, largely through his witness, the news about Jesus' miracle-working power was well-known throughout the region, resulting in widespread euphoria. The situation had reached epic proportions due to the unbridled enthusiasm of the unwieldy crowds. As in Galilee, the Lord had no desire to add fuel to the fire of their inherently materialistic and political expectations about Him (cf. John 6:15). Jesus issued similar commands at other times as well (cf. Matt. 8:4; 9:30; 12:16; 17:9; Mark 1:25, 34, 44; 3:12; 5:43; 7:36; 8:26, 30; 9:9; Luke 4:41; 9:21). On certain occasions, the Lord insisted on silence because He knew the report would amplify the enthusiastic fervor of the crowds, which would only hinder His ministry (cf. Mark 1:40–45; John 6:14–15). As noted above, that was likely part of Jesus' concern on this occasion since large crowds were already flocking to Him in the Decapolis (cf. Mark 8:1–10). At other times, the gag order served as an act of judgment on unbelievers by obscuring the truth from those who had permanently rejected Him (cf. Luke 9:21). However, the primary reason Jesus repeatedly insisted on this kind of silence is found in Mark 8:30–31. After His disciples identified Him as the Messiah and the Son of God (v. 29; cf. Matt. 16:18), "He warned them to tell no one about Him. And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again." Knowing that His earthly mission would not be accomplished until after His death and resurrection, Jesus instructed even His own disciples to remain quiet until after the story was complete. Many whom He healed knew Him merely as a miracle worker, but Jesus had come for a far more glorious purpose (cf. Luke 19:10). A message that highlighted only His miraculous healings would be inadequate. The full message about Him must include the truth that "Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3–4). (MNTC-Mark)

**Continued to proclaim** (2784)([kerusso](#) from [kerux/kerux](#) = a herald - one who acts as the medium of the authority of one who proclamation he makes; [kerugma](#) = the thing preached or the message) means to proclaim (publicly) or to herald or act as a public crier - the town official who would make a proclamation in a public gathering. **Kerusso** was used of the official whose duty it was to proclaim loudly and extensively the coming of an earthly king, even as **our gospel** is to clearly announce the coming of the King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev 19:16+).

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**Believer's Study Bible** refers to Jesus' order to not tell anyone as the "**Messianic Secret**"

On several occasions in the Gospel of Mark Jesus tells someone not to tell, either Who He is, or what they have seen that would demonstrate Who He is. This is called the **Messianic Secret**. Why did Jesus want to keep his identity as Messiah a secret?

1. **To avoid being considered just a "miracle worker."** Note that many of these commands follow miracles. Jesus did not want people to follow Him just to see Him do tricks. He came as the Son of God to ring salvation and forgiveness from sin, not just physical healing and miracles.
2. **To avoid undue publicity which would hinder His mobility and ministry to His disciples.** Note the result of the leper's disobedience in 1:45.
3. **To avoid the mistaken notion of the type of Messiah He came to be.** He came to suffer and serve and sacrifice Himself, not simply to display His power (cf. 10:45).
4. **To avoid the premature death that increased popularity could bring**

**NOTE:** Following His transfiguration, which displayed His glory to the disciples, Jesus tells them not to speak of this event "till the Son of Man had risen from the dead" (Mk 9:9). Following His resurrection and vindication, the identity of Messiah and the character of His mission is properly understood in its full scope. **After the resurrection, all believers are sent into the world "to tell"** (cf. Matthew 28:7, 8, 18–20; Mark 16:7; Luke 24:9, 44–47).

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**Question -** [What is the Messianic Secret?](#)

**Answer:** The Messianic Secret is a theme of biblical criticism developed in 1901 by a German Lutheran theologian named Wilhelm Wrede. The Messianic Secret involves Wrede's explanation for Jesus wanting to hide His identity from His enemies by commanding the disciples to [keep silent about His mission on earth and the miracles He performed](#). Wrede claimed that Jesus did not ever think



He was the Messiah and that Mark (and the rest of the New Testament authors) sensationalized Jesus and made Him into the Messiah. Wrede claims Mark added the Messianic Secret in an attempt to give a reason for why Jesus was not accepted by many as Messiah until after His death. Wrede's theory enjoyed some popularity during the 1920s but faded soon thereafter.

Is there any biblical basis for Wrede's theory? It is undeniable that Jesus told His disciples on several occasions to keep what He had done secret. Each of those incidents, however, has a much more plausible explanation than the one put forth by Wilhelm Wrede. Further, each is consistent with the other Gospel accounts, and not an invention by Mark.

In Mark 1:43–45 Christ commanded the leper He had healed, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony to them." But he went out and began to proclaim it freely, and to spread the word, so that Jesus could no longer go into a town openly, but stayed out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter." Jesus knew the publicity about the healing would hinder His ability to minister in the area, which is exactly what happened when the leper disobeyed, and worse, the sensationalism caused by miraculous healings would hamper the spreading of His message. Because of the leper's disobedience, Jesus could no longer enter a city without being mobbed by those seeking healing, causing Him to abandon His ministry in the city and keep to relatively uninhabited areas. The healing of the leper is also found in Matthew 8:1–4 and Luke 5:12–16, with Luke reiterating the reason for the command for secrecy in verses 15–16.

Further "evidence" for Wrede's theory of secrecy involves the explanation for Jesus speaking in parables in Mark 4:11 where He tells His disciples that the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God had been given to them, but to others He spoke in parables so that, "though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand." This is not, however, a plea for secrecy. Rather, it is an explanation of divine revelation in the hearts of true believers, revelation that is unavailable for those who, like the Pharisees, continued to reject the truth. The "mysteries of the kingdom" are revealed to those who have "ears to hear" but not to those whose hearts are darkened. As the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus would have been able to distinguish between those two groups. Again, this is not an invention of Mark, as it is reiterated in Matthew 13:11–17.

Mark 8:27–30 is another example of a statement that has led to misunderstanding about the secrecy Jesus required. When Peter, speaking for the rest of the disciples, declared Jesus to be "the Christ," which means "Messiah," Jesus "strictly warned them that they should tell no one about Him." Far from denying His identity as the Messiah, Jesus was aware that the people, and even the disciples, did not yet understand that He came to die on the cross for sin. They were awaiting the appearance of the Messiah as the conqueror who would free the Jews from Roman oppression. If the crowds attempted to press Him into service in such a way, His mission and message would be compromised. As further proof, Jesus immediately began to teach His disciples about His true mission (Mark 8:31–33).

The Messianic Secret theory is just that—a theory, and one that has been disproved and universally rejected among theologians. The truth is that Jesus commanded secrecy about His identity from certain people at certain times during His ministry, but for perfectly good and logical reasons. There can be no doubt, however, that by the time His ministry came to an end, His disciples knew exactly who He was and is—God in flesh who came to save His people from their sins. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

**Mark 7:37 They were utterly astonished, saying, "He has done all things well; He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."**

Wuest And they were completely flabbergasted, and that in a superabundant degree which itself was augmented by the addition of yet more astonishment, saying, He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to be hearing, and the dumb to be speaking.

NET Mark 7:37 People were completely astounded and said, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

NLT Mark 7:37 They were completely amazed and said again and again, "Everything he does is wonderful. He even makes the deaf to hear and gives speech to those who cannot speak."

ESV Mark 7:37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

NIV Mark 7:37 People were overwhelmed with amazement. "He has done everything well," they said. "He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

GNT Mark 7:37 καὶ περπερισσὸς ἐξέπλυσοντο ἁγόντες, Καὶ ὅς τινα πεποήκεν, καὶ τὸς κωφοὺς ποιεῖ κοῖν καὶ [τοὺς] ἁλούς λαλεῖν.



KJV Mark 7:37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

ASV Mark 7:37 And they were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well; he maketh even the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

CSB Mark 7:37 They were extremely astonished and said, "He has done everything well! He even makes deaf people hear, and people unable to speak, talk!"

NKJ Mark 7:37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He makes both the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

NRS Mark 7:37 They were astounded beyond measure, saying, "He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak."

YLT Mark 7:37 and they were being beyond measure astonished, saying, 'Well hath he done all things; both the deaf he doth make to hear, and the dumb to speak.'

- **were:** Mk 1:27 2:12 4:41 5:42 6:51 Ps 139:14 Ac 2:7-12 3:10-13 14:11
- **He has:** Ge 1:31 Lu 23:41
- **he makes:** Ex 4:10,11
- [Mark 7-37 Admiration or Adoration](#) - James Hastings
- **Mark 7 Resources** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JESUS MAKES ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL!

**They were utterly astonished, saying** - **ESV** = "were astonished beyond measure." **Utterly** is a double superlative **hyperperissos** (huper = above + perissos = superabundance) used only here in NT (no uses in Lxx) meaning beyond all measure or to an extreme degree! Are these the same people who implored Jesus to leave their territory not that long ago? **Amazed** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating again and again as they pondered this miracle they were astonished. "Their astonishment at the miracle was so great that it almost deprived them of their self-possession, and it was in superabundance, and then some on top of that." (Wuest) Earlier Mark had used this same verb *ekplesso* to describe that the hearers **"were amazed** at His teaching." (Mk 1:22+, cf similar use in Mk 6:2+).

**Amazed** (1605)([ekplesso](#) from **ek** = out + **plesso** = strike) ) means strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away, force out or cast off by a blow. It is interesting that our English word **"astonish"** which is derived from the Latin word *extonare* meaning to **strike with thunder**! What a picture of Jesus' miraculous powers, striking His audience like thunder! **Ekplesso** means to drive out of one's senses by a sudden shock or strong feeling, or "to be exceedingly struck in mind". It means to cause to be filled with amazement to the point of being overwhelmed (struck out of one's senses). It encompasses the ideas of wonder, astonishment or amazement. *Ekplesso* expresses a stunned amazement that leaves the subject unable to grasp what is happening. **Thayer** writes that **ekplesso** is "common in Greek from Homer down; properly, to strike out, expel by a blow, drive out or away; to cast off by a blow, to drive out; commonly, to strike one out of self-possession, to strike with panic, shock, astonish; passive to be struck with astonishment, astonished, amazed." Mt. 7:28; Mt. 13:54; Mt. 19:25; Mt. 22:33; Mk. 1:22; Mk. 6:2; Mk. 7:37; Mk. 10:26; Mk. 11:18; Lk. 2:48; Lk. 4:32; Lk. 9:43; Acts 13:12

**He has done all things well** - **Has done** is in the [perfect tense](#) indicating the lasting effect or impact of what He had initially done. **Wuest** adds "the [perfect tense](#), showing the settled convictions of the people as to the meritorious work of our Lord."

**Akin** - This verse has deep theological significance. "He has done everything well (good)" echoes Creation and God's work in Genesis 1-2. "He makes the deaf hear and the mute speak" recalls the words of Isaiah who wrote that when the Messiah comes, "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the 9 tongue of the mute sing for joy. For waters break forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert" (Isa 35:5-6+)....Thus we see the "grand redemptive storyline" in a miracle put on display. Creation ("He does all things well [good]") → Fall ("A deaf man because of sin") → Redemption (The miracle of healing) → Restoration (God's kingdom has arrived). Oh, there is so much here we need to see. There is so much here we need to "zealously proclaim."

**James Edwards** adds "The allusion of Isaiah 35+ is of supreme significance for Mark's presentation of Jesus, not only because the restoration of speech signals the eschatological arrival of the Day of the Lord but also because the desert wastelands of Lebanon

(Isa 35:2+ = "the glory of Lebanon will be given to it") will receive the joy of God. The regions of Tyre and Sidon are, of course, precisely the Lebanon of Isaiah 35. Jesus' healing...in the Decapolis becomes the firstfruit of the fulfillment of Isa 35:10, that Gentile Lebanon will join "the ransom of the Lord [and] enter Zion with singing"! Salvation thus comes to the Gentile world in Jesus, who is God's eschatological Redeemer from Zion. As we have noted before, the only categories adequate for Mark to describe the person and work of Jesus are ultimately the categories of God. Once again, as in the story of the Syrophonecian woman (Mk 7:24-30), salvation is from the Jews" (John 4:22). (Pillar NTC-- Mark).

**He makes even the deaf to hear and the mute to speak** ([laleo](#)) - **Makes** ([poieo](#)) is in the [present tense](#) speaking of continuing activity (this was not the only deaf man Jesus healed). Well is kalos, the third use in Mark 7 (Mk 7:6,9) and means beautifully, in the right way, honorably, commendably. One is reminded on Ecclesiastes 3:11KJV "He hath made every thing **beautiful** in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." Listen to this old Maranatha chorus about the BEAUTIFUL ONE...

### [IN HIS TIME](#)

In His time, in His time,  
He makes all thing beautiful in His time.  
Lord, my life to you I bring,  
May each song I have to sing,  
Be to you a lovely thing, in your time.

In your time, in your time,  
You make all thing beautiful in your time.  
Lord, my life to you I bring,  
May each song I have to sing,  
Be to you a lovely thing, in your time.

**Deaf** ([2974](#)) see note above on [kophos](#)

**Mute** ([216](#))(**alalos** from **a** = negative + **laleo** = speak) means speechless, unable to articulate, speak or talk. 3x in NT - Mk. 7:37; Mk. 9:17; Mk. 9:25. In Mark 9:17, 25, "dumb spirit" is a malignant spirit, dumb or silent through obstinacy or imposed by a higher power which is contrary to one's usual character (see Mark 1:24, 34; 5:7), hence Christ says this type of demon is difficult to be cast out (Mark 9:29) (Zodhiates) Twice in the Septuagint - Ps 31:18<sup>+</sup> = " **Let** the lying lips **be** mute (Hebrew - alam = to bind, speechless; Lxx = alalos), Which speak arrogantly against the righteous With pride and contempt." Ps 38:13<sup>+</sup>

**Henry Morris - all things well.** Jesus, indeed, "has done all things well." One strong evidence of His deity is this very fact. No matter how carefully one studies His words and His deeds, no real flaw can be found in any of them--no deficiency, nothing to retract, nothing to change at all. Everything He did or said was exactly right for each occasion.

And since our souls have learned His love,  
What mercies has He made us prove,  
Mercies which all our praise excel;  
Our Jesus hath done all things well.  
—Samuel Medley

**Brian Bill** - As for us, we kept repeating this refrain: '**He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.**' He is a good God and is working everything together for your good and His glory. You might not catch the significance of the last phrase but it's a reference to Isaiah 35:5-6+, which is a precise prophecy written 700 years earlier that tells us what the Messiah would do when He showed up: "Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap like a deer, and the tongue of the mute sing for joy." So let's not be tepid in our praise today! Let's let the lame leap and the mute be filled with music. May He untie our tongues so we can proclaim His praises! Please stand as I pray and then we'll bust out into praise together.

### [O for a thousand tongues to sing](#)

my great Redeemer's praise,  
the glories of my God and King,  
the triumphs of his grace!

**Hear him, you deaf; his praise, you mute,**

your loosened tongues employ;  
you blind, behold your savior come,  
and leap, you lame, for joy.  
O For a Thousand Tongues to Sing

My gracious Master and my God,  
Assist me to proclaim,  
To spread through all the earth abroad  
The honours of Thy Name.

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**Mark 7:37NKJV They were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well."** ([My All in All - Robert J Morgan](#))

One day over lunch this week, I asked my wife a strange question. It was sort of out of the blue, and she didn't know what to make of it. I asked her, "How would you react if a good friend came up to you and sliced you open with a knife?"

"Well," she said, shocked, "that would be terrible."

"Yes," I said, "but what if that friend were a surgeon and he was performing an operation that would save your life?"

Well, that's different, isn't it? We still wouldn't like it at the time, but we'd be grateful for a friend with enough skill to help us at a critical moment.

There are times when the Lord allows things to happen that we don't like at the time, but we know He intends all things for our good, that He does all things well, and that in all things we are more than conquerors. So, as Job put it, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust Him."

Our friend Jesus is the Great Physician, who will never harm us but will always do us good. Goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives. And even if it appears for a moment that He is harming us, we know it's in appearance only and not in reality, for it will inexorably turn for our good. We can trust Him completely and joyfully, for He does all things well.

Praise God who works all things for good

For those who love His name.

His providential care shall turn

All blessings into gain.

—RJM