



JESUS: The Servant of God

A verse-by-verse study of the Gospel of Mark

The Gospel and Worship

Mark 7:1-23

Message #18

Sermon given on March 29, 2026



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

The Gospel and Worship

Mark 7:1-23

Opening Comments

- Open your Bibles to **Mark 7**
- Today, we continue a series through the gospel of Mark – **JESUS: The Servant of God**
- Let's open this time in our service with a word of prayer. - **Pray**

Teaching

- **The Gospel and Worship**
- The last time, Jesus caused the disciples to marvel about who He was when He came to them in the middle of the night walking on the water.
- This was after the miraculous feeding of the multitudes and countless miracles.
- His teaching about the kingdom of God caused His audience to wonder where He got this knowledge and authority.
- Jesus' reputation caused the Jewish religious establishment to send people to check Jesus out.
- **Mark 7:1**
- The Pharisees were a sect of Judaism that came into existence a couple hundred years before Christ.
- They were committed to living according to the Scriptures.
- What started as a movement to draw people back to the Word of God changed over the next couple hundred years into a religion.
- Religion has a place in the world to bring people into the presence of God and His life-giving Word.
- Unfortunately, religion often stands in the way of people connecting to God.
- Too often, religion becomes the object of worship rather than God.
- These religious guys come from Jerusalem and the first thing they do is find fault with the disciples.
- **Mark 7:2-5**
- This is not an issue of the disciples having dirty hands.

- The Pharisees and scribes had established 613 rules from the Scriptures pertaining to every facet of life.
- Rabbis would then comment on how to interpret the rules, and they didn't all agree.
- In addition to the 613 rules, the elders of the Jewish faith established traditions that the Pharisees considered as important as the Scriptures.
- Some of these traditions were hundreds of years old.
- The handwashing ritual was one of those traditions.
- Some of these rituals and traditions have superstitious elements to them.
- Some believed that if you didn't do the handwashing ritual an evil spirit would sit on your food and cause you harm if you ate the food.
- The Pharisees challenge Jesus to explain why the disciples are not following their rules.
- One of the problems of this kind of religious system is that it breeds religious pride.
- The Pharisees believed the way they worshipped God was the right way and every other way was wrong.
- We should not believe that our way of worshipping God is the only way to do it.
- We sincerely believe we are worshipping God in a way that He has called us to do it.
- And unless someone is doing something the Bible strictly prohibits, we shouldn't judge other people's worship as wrong just because they don't do it like we do.
- Jesus challenges them to examine their heart.
- **Mark 7:6-8**
- Jesus calls them hypocrites, pretenders, fakers.
- You claim to follow the Law of God and then replace those laws with the traditions of men.
- God's Word is always the standard we evaluate our lives and worship with.
- He gives them an example of their hypocrisy.
- **Mark 7:9-13**
- There were no such things as pensions, retirement accounts, or social security for people once they can no longer work.

- Jesus quotes the Fifth Commandment, honor your father and mother.
- It was expected of children, especially sons, to care for their parents and provide for them in their old age.
- But they came up with a rule that said they could dedicate all their wealth to God, so they couldn't help their parents.
- But it also allowed them to keep their money and use it for themselves.
- Jesus says that is wicked hypocrisy.
- Jesus then took this as an opportunity to teach the multitude standing around listening.
- Notice, Jesus didn't argue with the Pharisees, He just pointed out their hypocrisy and then turned to speak to people who would be more open to the message.
- **Mark 7:14-16**
- One of the things the Jews are famous for is their dietary restrictions.
- God had told them in the Law given through Moses that they were to avoid certain foods, like pork.
- Jesus is saying it was never about the food but about their willingness to obey God and worship Him and Him alone.
- It was about differentiating between the absolute holiness of God and their sinful nature.
- The disciples have a problem understanding this.
- **Mark 7:17-19**
- The disciples grew up with the command, do not eat bacon.
- Jesus is making the point that the dietary laws were to guide the Israelites until Jesus came with the better covenant.
- Even after Jesus explains it to them, they do not get it.
- We know that because Jesus had to meet Peter in a vision to explain it to him again in Acts 9.
- The problem is not what goes into your body that defiles you.
- **Mark 7:20**
- To defile is to make morally or ritually impure or unclean.
- Because we are not under the law, we are not concerned with being ritually impure.
- We should be concerned about being morally pure.
- The dictionary defines moral as...

Moral: of or relating to principles of right and wrong in behavior; conforming to a standard of behavior that is considered right and good by most people.

- Most people in our culture believe in moral relativism.

Moral relativism is the view that moral judgments are not universally true, but are relative to cultural, societal, or individual standpoints.

- Moral relativism is any judgment that excludes God and His Word.
- Most of the world believes in subjective morality.
- As Christ-followers, we believe in universal objective morality.
- That means we believe there is right and wrong that applies universally to every culture, society, and nation.
- Our morality has an object, God.
- Our objective is to be as morally pure as God is. **1 Peter 1:15-16**
¹⁵...as He who called you *is* holy, you also be holy in all *your* conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, "***Be holy, for I am holy.***"
- In this context, holiness and purity are synonymous.
- Our goal is perfect holiness or purity.
- And before someone says no one can be perfect, just hold on, we'll talk about that later.
- Jesus is saying we need to watch out for the things that morally defile us.
- Jesus is using food as His illustration, but it is obvious that He means more than just food.
- It is what comes out of us that defiles us.
- Those would be our words and behaviors.
- He then goes on to describe SOME of the things that defile us.
- This list is not exhaustive; but it does cover a lot of life.
- **Mark 7:21-23**
- Jesus is saying that nothing outside of our heart can make us do any of these things.
- If we do them, it is because that is what is inside our heart. **Jeremiah 17:9-10a**

⁹The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?

¹⁰I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind...

- Our problem is that we don't know if these things are in our heart until they show up in our thoughts, words, or actions.
- Jesus is making a very important point here.
- It is not the outside influences of our lives that defile us, it is the defiling nature of the sin that lives in all of us.

- In counseling it is not uncommon to hear someone explain why they have done something because of what was done to them.
- I used harsh words because she made me angry.
- Or, I took that thing from work because they are not paying me what I am worth.
- If someone justifies doing something wrong based on what someone else has done, then they are denying what Jesus is saying about their heart in this text.
- They did not do that wrong thing because of what someone did, they did it because that wrong thing was in their heart waiting for a good excuse to come out.
- We use another word in the church to describe wrong things, sin.
- God calls us to be pure, but sin makes us impure.
- Jeremiah told us that we don't know what is in our heart.
- God does, and if there is sin in there, He hates it because it will make us impure and separate us from His grace.
- That is a problem because the good life that Jesus came and died to give us cannot be experienced if those impurities are showing up in our lives.
- God loves us and wants us to live that good life and so He works in our life to deal with that sin.
- God will send something into your life that draws the sin that is in your heart up to the surface where you can see it.
- I call those things sin-magnets.
- A sin-magnet doesn't cause you to sin, it just draws that sin up to the surface, and then you choose what you do with it.
- You can choose to let God the Holy Spirit help you deal with it or you can choose to express that sin, that is your choice.
- Until you are perfectly pure, God is going to send sin-magnets into your life.
- And just so we are clear, sin-magnets are other sinners.
- Every human who comes into your orbit is a potential sin-magnet God is going to use to show you the sin living in your heart.
- That person who cut you off on the highway didn't make you angry, they just revealed the anger that lives in your heart.

- That person who gave you a strange look didn't make you feel insecure; they just drew your insecurity to the surface.
- Your spouse or teenager didn't cause you to lose your temper, God just used them to reveal what was in your heart.
- God promises to help us to be morally undefiled. **1 John 1:9**
⁹**If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.**
- Another word for defiled is unclean.
- Our goal is perfection.
- We get as close as we are going to in this life when we repent of every sin that shows up in our life and let the Holy Spirit make us clean.
- When that sin-magnet shows up in your life, and sin rises to the surface of your heart, God wants you to acknowledge it, to confess it, and let the Holy Spirit cleanse you of it.
- This is a spiritual battle every Christ-follower can win. **2 Corinthians 10:4-5**

⁴**For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, ⁵casting down arguments and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ...**

- The Pharisees thought they were worshipping God by following the rules, regulations, and traditions.
- Jesus called them hypocrites because they weren't dealing with the sin in their heart.
- Some people believe they are worshipping God when they come to church.
- Here is a hard truth; if you aren't worshipping God Monday through Saturday, then you are probably not worshipping God when you show up at church on Sunday.
- We worship God with every thought that comes into our mind, with every word that comes out of our mouth, with everywhere we go with our feet, and with everything we do with our hands.
- We worship God when we love Him and everything and everyone He loves. **Matthew 22:37-38**

³⁷**Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."** ³⁸**This is the first and great commandment."**

- That is true, God-glorifying worship.
- **Pray – Last Song**