



## LESSON 88 Mark 7:1-16

**1**Then came together unto him the Pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem. **2**And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault. **3**For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders. **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. **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? **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. **7**Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. **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. **9**And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.

The Pharisees were a religious and political group which insisted on all of the law (as the scribes interpreted it) being kept. They and the scribes were men of much education in the scriptures and prided themselves on keeping every part of the law, even down to tithing little herbs like parsley and mint. They were what we would call "legalistic." They had knowledge and privilege as leaders, but missed the true principles that God wanted them to learn and live by.

The Pharisees and some of the scholars of the Jewish scriptures wanted to see the Man Who was stirring up so much interest and excitement in Galilee, so they went on a fact-finding tour to the Capernaum area. (No doubt, they had heard about and may have even seen some of the many healings that were done by Jesus, yet their focus was on finding something wrong, and they did-- that some of Jesus' disciples (not all), didn't ritually cleanse their hands before they ate a meal. This washing was not for hygiene, but a ceremonial washing of the hands, as an evidence that they were keepers of the law. It was a performance established by the elders (7:5), not God, so others would be impressed how pious they were.

Finding fault with some of the disciples' lack of following their traditions, they questioned Jesus about it. In His reply, He calls these critics "hypocrites." In verse 6, Jesus quotes Isaiah and gives a working definition of what a religious hypocrite is. A hypocrite is someone who honors God with what he says, but is astray from God in his heart. A hypocrite is more interested in outward appearances than inward motives being right. He hides evil desires with outward piety. (Matt 23:25-28) He trusts self rather than God. (Luke 18:9) His heart is far from God. (v 6). These Pharisees and scribes knew they were in the presence of Someone great (John 3:1-2), even if at this time they did not recognize Him as the Messiah.

Why were they looking for faults, when they should have been worshipping the One Whom God had sent? How sad that they were so near to their long-awaited Messiah, but they were more interested in hand-washing rituals!

Is there anything in your life that keeps you from worshipping the Lord? **9**And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. Don't let

anything come between you and the Lord. Nothing is more important than your relationship with Him.

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