



Mark: Following in the Footsteps of Jesus

Chapter #7 – The Heart of True Defilement and Faith

Main Idea

Mark 7 shifts the focus from external religious practices to the condition of the human heart. Jesus confronts the Pharisees over tradition, teaching that true defilement comes from within, not from outward observance. The chapter then highlights authentic faith through the humility of a Gentile woman and the compassion of Jesus in healing a deaf and mute man. Mark 7 reminds us that genuine faith flows from a transformed heart rather than religious performance. God is ALWAYS looking at our hearts!

Chapter Outline

- Jesus Challenges Human Traditions (verses 1 through 13)
- What Truly Defiles a Person (verses 14 through 23)
- The Faith of a Syrophenician Woman (verses 24 through 30)
- Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man (verses 31 through 37)

Questions for Consideration

1. Why were the Pharisees more focused on tradition than the heart?
2. What does Jesus teach about the source of sin? Think especially in terms of the condition of the heart from the Isaiah passage that Jesus quoted.
3. Why is the faith of the Gentile woman so significant?
4. How does compassion appear throughout this chapter?
5. What does this chapter teach us about authentic faith?



Mark 7 (NIV)

That Which Defiles

⁷ The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus ² and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 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. 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.)

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 defiled hands?”

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.

⁷ They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.”

⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

⁹ And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰ For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ ¹¹ But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— ¹² then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

¹⁴ Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵ Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” ¹⁶

¹⁷ After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. ¹⁸ “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? ¹⁹ For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

²⁰ He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. ²¹ For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

Jesus Honors a Syrophenician Woman’s Faith

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. ²⁵ In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an impure spirit came and fell at his feet. ²⁶ The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

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 the dogs.”

²⁸ “Lord,” she replied, “even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

²⁹ Then he told her, “For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter.”

³⁰ She went home and found her child lying on the bed, and the demon gone.

Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man

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. ³² There some people brought to him a man who was deaf and could hardly talk, and they begged Jesus to place his hand on him.

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. ³⁴ He looked up to heaven and with a deep sigh said to him, “Ephphatha!” (which means “Be opened!”). ³⁵ At this, the man’s ears were opened, his tongue was loosened and he began to speak plainly.

³⁶ Jesus commanded them not to tell anyone. But the more he did so, the more they kept talking about it. ³⁷ People were overwhelmed with amazement. “He has done everything well,” they said. “He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

Footnotes

- a. [Mark 7:4](#) Some early manuscripts *pitchers, kettles and dining couches*
- b. [Mark 7:7](#) Isaiah 29:13
- c. [Mark 7:9](#) Some manuscripts *set up*
- d. [Mark 7:10](#) Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16
- e. [Mark 7:10](#) Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9
- f. [Mark 7:16](#) Some manuscripts include here the words of 4:23.
- g. [Mark 7:24](#) Many early manuscripts *Tyre and Sidon*
- h. [Mark 7:31](#) That is, the Ten Cities

