



When Rite is Wrong

Mark 7:1-21

One day some Pharisees and teachers of religious law arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus. ² They noticed that some of his disciples failed to follow the Jewish ritual of hand washing before eating. ³ (The Jews, especially the Pharisees, do not eat until they have poured water over their cupped hands, as required by their ancient traditions. 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.) 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.”

- Mark 7:1-5 (NLT)



⁶ Jesus replied, “You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

‘These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

⁷ Their worship is a farce,
for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.’

⁸ For you ignore God’s law and substitute your own tradition.”

⁹ Then he said, “You skillfully sidestep God’s law in order to hold on to your own tradition.”



- Mark 7:6-9 (NLT)

“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.’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.’¹² In this way, you let them disregard their needy parents.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.”



- Mark 7:10-13 (NLT)

Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “All of you listen,” he said, “and try to understand. ¹⁵ It’s not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart.” 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. ¹⁸ “Don’t you understand either?” he asked. “Can’t you see that the food you put into your body cannot defile you? 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.)



- Mark 7:14-19 (NLT)

And then he added, “It is what comes from inside that defiles you.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. ²³ All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you.”



- Mark 7:20-23 (NLT)

“... He saved us, not because of the righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He washed away our sins, giving us a new birth and new life through the Holy Spirit.”



- Titus 3:5 (NLT)

When Rite is Wrong (Mark 7:1-21)

1. Worship: What kind of worship is pleasing to God?
2. Authority: By what authority do we believe what we believe?
3. Morality: What makes us clean or unclean in the sight of God?



“Follow your heart” is a creed embraced by billions of people. It’s a statement of faith in one of the great pop-cultural myths of the Western world... Until you consider that your heart has sociopathic tendencies... My heart tells me that all of reality ought to serve my desires. My heart likes to think best of me and worst of others, unless those others happen to think well of me—then they are wonderful... The truth is, no one lies to us more than our own hearts. They don’t tell us the truth; they just tell us what we want ... our hearts will not save us. We need to be saved from our hearts.

- Jon Bloom, Don’t Follow Your Heart

