

STUDY ON THE TEACHING OF JESUS

DEFILEMENT!

Read Mark 7:1-23

The KJV bible dictionary defines “defile or “defilement” as:

1. To make unclean; to render foul or dirty; in a general sense.
2. To make impure; to render turbid; as, the water or liquor is defiled.
3. To soil or sully; to tarnish; as reputation, etc.
4. To pollute; to make ceremonially unclean.
5. To corrupt chastity; to debauch; to violate; to tarnish the purity of character by lewdness.
6. To taint, in a moral sense; to corrupt; to vitiate; to render impure with sin.

“Purity features heavily in Islam, and acts of purification are accordingly prominent in the daily lives of most Muslims. According to the Qur’an, every human being is created in a state of purity and right belief known as fiṭra (30:30). One who professes faith returns to this natural state, which is maintained by following Allah’s requirements, among which cleansings and rituals feature prominently. The partial ablution of wuḍū’ removes minor defilement before the five daily prayers (5:6), and those who are in a major state of defilement are not to “come anywhere near prayer” before they have completed the full-body cleansing of ghusl (4:43). In Islam, acceptable worship, and salvation itself, require purity (87:14-17).”
[\(https://www.zwemercenter.com/muslim-evangelism-in-terms-of-purity-from-defilement/\)](https://www.zwemercenter.com/muslim-evangelism-in-terms-of-purity-from-defilement/)

To Our Study – The Question:

The Pharisees and scribes have noticed that some of Jesus’ disciples eat with defiled hands and ask why they do not follow the tradition of the elders by washing before they eat.

“Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands?” These washings were commanded by tradition, not by Scripture. The religious leaders knew this, yet they still criticized the disciples for not obeying these traditions. In Judaism of that time they honoured the written law. But there was also the oral law, which was written down, but was man’s tradition and interpretation on top of the written law. Many Jewish leaders of Jesus’ time honoured the oral law even more than the written law.

Q: What would you define as tradition today with regards the Christian and Church?

A strict Jew would do this (ceremonial washing) 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.

Q: It begs the question of how we might be honouring tradition over the written word of God today.

Jesus Answer:

You hypocrites: Jesus spoke so strongly because these leaders were far too concerned with trivial matters like ritual washing. When they focused on these trivial traditions, they excluded everyone who didn’t keep the traditions, and so they discouraged them from coming to God.

The Living Bible paraphrases Isaiah’s quote: *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.*

This is the whole idea behind the word hypocrite. The word in the ancient Greek language referred to “an actor” or “someone who wears a mask.” The image they promote is more important to them than what they actually are.

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 claim to be Christians, but their heart is far from Me.

The Two Pillars of Legalism:

- Taking a commandment or opinion of men and teaching or promoting it as a doctrine from God.
- It would be bad enough to add the commandments of men to the word of God. But almost without fail, the legalist or religious hypocrite goes the next step – to reject the commandment of God and to keep your tradition. In doing this, they subtract the real essence and the focus of God’s word.

Jesus Example of Tradition Quoting from Moses

“For instance, Moses gave you this law from God: ‘Honour your father and mother.’ And he said that anyone who speaks against his father or mother must die. 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.’ And so, you break the law of God in order to protect your man-made tradition. And this is only one example. There are many, many others.” (vv10-13 TLB)

Through this act of denying the needy parents what was promised them and instead, become religious in giving in the temple, a son could completely disobey the command to honour your father or mother and justify himself in the process. Jesus called this making the word of God of no effect through your tradition.

Jesus Reveals What Truly Defiles:

“Then Jesus called the crowd together again, saying, “Hear my words, all of you, and take them to heart. What truly contaminates a person is not what he puts into his body, but what comes out. That’s what makes a person defiled” (vv14-15 TPT)

This is not to say that there are not defiling things that we can take into ourselves (such as pornography). But in this specific context, Jesus spoke about ceremonial cleanliness in regard to food. The fundamental principle is simple. Eating with unclean hands or any other such thing that we put into us is not defiling. Rather, what comes out of us defiles and reveals that we have unclean (defiled) hearts.

“Then he went into a house to get away from the crowds, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the statement he had just made. “Don’t you understand either?” he asked. “Can’t you see that what you eat won’t harm your soul? For food doesn’t come in contact with your heart, but only passes through the digestive system.” (By saying this he showed that every kind of food is kosher.) And then he added, “It is the thought-life that pollutes. For from within, out of men’s hearts, come evil thoughts of lust, theft, murder, adultery, wanting what belongs to others, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, pride, and all other

folly. All these vile things come from within; they are what pollute you and make you unfit for God.” (vv17-23 TLB)

God is far more concerned with what comes out of us than what goes into us. This is especially true when it comes to foods and traditions and rituals. Our wicked thoughts and affections, words and actions, defile us, and these only. As a corrupt fountain sends forth corrupt streams, so does a corrupt heart send forth corrupt reasonings, corrupt appetites and passions, and all the wicked words and actions that come from them. A spiritual understanding of the law of God, and a sense of the evil of sin, will cause a man to seek for the grace of the Holy Spirit, to keep down the evil thoughts and affections that work within.