

EQUIPPING DISCIPLES FOR KINGDOM GROWTH
Mark Series: *Let the Gospel Tell the Gospel*

PHARISEEITIS

MARK 7:1-13

Covenant Presbyterian Church

16 December A.D. 2012

Introduction

1. Read Mark 7:1-13
2. Remember context and purpose of Mark. Context: Jesus' earthly ministry in Galilee revealing himself as the Son of God. Purpose: Jesus is ushering in His Kingdom and here we see kingdoms in conflict.
3. "Letting the Gospel tell the gospel"—Where is the gospel in this passage? → Stay awake to the end.
4. Caution: This is a perfect text to apply to someone else which would be just another form of hypocrisy, another way of not dealing with your own sin, and another triumph for the enemy.

Phariseeitis and It's Symptoms (v. 1-5)

1. Pharisaism—a movement of the religious elite committed to *"...strict observance of the law, and especially ritual purity, was regulated by a body of ethical teachings known as 'the tradition of the elders', developed by the rabbis as an application of the law to specific situations... creating a social and religious gap between a sanctimonious elite, 'the righteous' and the general population, 'the sinners.'"* (New Geneva Study Bible)
2. The symptoms of Phariseeitis:
 - a. Their hearts were set against Jesus and they had come to test, waiting for any slip up (v. 1-2a). They had traveled about 90 miles to discredit and destroy Jesus and His ministry.
 - b. They had added to the Word of God (v. 2-4). They had taken God's Word about priests washing at the tabernacle (Exodus 30:19) and turned it to say something else as to who and when this should be applied.
 - c. They demanded that others fit their mold of holiness and righteousness (v. 5). They were critical and condemning of those who did not fit their world.
 - d. They were focused on externals..."impure hands" (v. 5) to the neglect of the heart. What about impure hearts?
 - e. They had a standard that was man-made—"tradition of the elders" (v. 5). Why was God's Word not standard?
 - f. They were graceless (v. 1-5) and grace killing (Mark 8:15. "Beware the leaven of the Pharisees").
3. **Application:**
 - a. Is your heart set against, hardened against anyone this morning? Do you lie in wait for the slip up of someone else?
 - b. Have you added to the Word of God by creating a code of behavior that others must adhere to? Have you become critical and condemning of those who do not measure up? Do you ever stop to ask, "Why do I hold this value? Is it from the Word of God?"
 - c. Do you focus on externals to the neglect of the heart? Are you quicker to look at another's heart than your own?
 - d. Are you a grace-less person? → Are you more shocked by another's sin and weakness than you are amazed at God's goodness to you?
 - e. Are you a grace-killer? → Do you spend more time/words tearing others down, criticizing, complaining, than you do building up, encouraging and praising?

Jesus' Diagnosis (v. 6-13)

1. "You are hypocrites." (v. 6-7)
 - a. Literally, "mask-wearers". Their concern was to look good on the outside. But problems always move inside out (see v.14-23). They had the appearance of life but they were dead (see Matthew 23:27, "white-washed tombs").
 - b. They honor with their lips but their hearts are far from Him. The legalists were not legal enough! The Law was applied only at a surface level. It never penetrated the heart.
 - c. **Application:** Are you honoring Him with your lips but with a heart far from Him? Where is the hypocrisy in your heart? You have it. Will you name it and repent of it?
2. "You neglect the commandment of God by holding to the tradition of man." (v. 8-12)
 - a. Their traditions had not only masked the condition of their hearts but had also gotten in the way of their obedience to God.
 - b. Jesus' example—God's command to honor father and mother, their vow (*Corban*) that served as an out clause. This is like our calling "shotgun", "fives", or "I get the last..." What happened to serving?
 - c. **Application:** How do we do this?
 - i. Do we refuse to love the illegal immigrant because "they shouldn't be here in the first place" (tradition)? Should I not love you because you speed? Was this Jesus' attitude toward us?
 - ii. Do we refuse to love our neighbor because our schedules are too full (tradition)? Are we willing to ask, "Why do we do this?" Are we willing to make the life change God may ask of us?
 - iii. Do our church "traditions" get in the way? Are we willing to let externals go if that would honor God and serve His people? Are we willing to love and serve any and all (homeless, prostitute, immigrant, pierced and tattooed, shorts and sandals) in our midst? Are we willing to love and unite with those we might even disagree with?
3. "You invalidate the Word of God." (v. 13)
 - a. Because they added to the Word of God and had set their man-made law above God's law, the Word of God was unnecessary, neglected, and even contradicted.
 - b. **Caution**—Jesus is not anti-law (see Matthew 5:17 and entire Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7). Nor is Jesus anti-history or anti-tradition (see Genesis – Esther, Psalms, prophets, gospels, Acts, Hebrews 11). These serve a wonderful purpose: to encourage our faith as we see God's work in the past, to pass down truth as a guard against every wind of doctrine, and to expose our blind spots (C.S. Lewis' "chronological snobbery"). Doctrine and tradition are important, even vital... but the Word of God is much, much more so.

Conclusion

1. Phariseeitis... you and I have it. Lots of what we see in the Pharisees lives in us.
2. There is one cure... grace. See the grace of God in the sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50), the story of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35), Paul's testimony (I Timothy 1:12-17), and the angel's announcement of the coming Savior (Matthew 1:18-24).