

Scripture Reference: Mark 7:1-16

July 12, 2015

"My Actions Aren't the Issue"

Focus: Living right before God.

vv. 1-5; The "Traditions of the Elders"

The religious leaders asked deals with obeying the "*traditions of the elders*" and not the expressed wishes of God.

Their question holds two warnings for those seeking to live out a relationship with God.

The Pharisees began during the inter biblical period, a time when Israel was growing lax in the devotion to God.

The Pharisee wanted to call the people to holiness. But, over time, they began to define what holiness looked like, i.e. "*the traditions of men.*"

A characteristic with humanity is that *we, you and I*, want to take the commands of God - one step further. Remember Eve in dealing with Satan? (Gen. 3:6-7).

Warning One; *What God says is sufficient. He doesn't need amplification.* - Psalms 19:6-11

Warning Two; *Obedience to what God says is most desirable. It pleases God when His servants show their love by simply being obedient.*

God seeks obedience, as best as you understand Him. Anything else results in sin (Rom. 14:22-23).

vv. 6-13; Jesus' Response? He Points the Pharisees Back to What God Said.

The Pharisee were arguing about a non-point; what men say others are to do. Jesus did not debate the validity of their thoughts. He called them back to truth.

In the process, Jesus reveals two more dangers inherent in taking God's words further, too much focus on the external and compromising the essential.

Warning Three; *Since we can't see the heart, our extra efforts are concentrated on the outside.*

See to what Jesus says in vv. 14-16.

Actions matters to you and I because all we can evaluate is the external. Therefore, we teach, if people do sin A or sin B, they are a sinner.

In reality, since people live apart from a relationship with God, they do what *they* think is right. Problem is, it isn't – Prov. 14:12 / 16:25.

People are not rebellious because they do rebellious things. It is because they are rebellious that they do rebellious things.

Warning Four; *Passion to conform the external always compromises the essential need of submitting the internal.*

It seems humanity is wholly incapable of serving God from both the spirit and the flesh. One will always dominate the other (see Matt. 6:24).

Choosing to serve God from the flesh, does not address the heart. Serving God first from the heart, leads to the submission of one's actions.

My, and Your, Actions Aren't the Issue.

Like any vessel, Jesus pointed out people can present a spotless exterior, while leaving the inside filthy.

We live in a fallen world, dominated by godless practices, inhabited by sinful people. However, This does not mean a disciple cannot journey through this world unsoiled.

God makes it possible, for Jesus' disciples, to live as lights in the darkness and salt amidst corruption. - Rom. 6:1-7