

## Why Traditions Need To Be Tested (Mark 7)

While clothing fashions tend to come and go, traditions don't. They are much more permanent. In Africa we have many customs and traditions that have continued unchanged for hundreds of years. A tradition may be described as "a belief, opinion or practice that is passed on from one person to another." Practically every nation on earth has its own unique customs and traditions, whether Asian, American or African. Some of these are good and worth retaining. Others, however, may actually be contradictory to the ways of God. As Christians, 1Thessalonians 5:21 tells us to "test all things; hold fast what is good." Traditions should always be tested by the truth. In this chapter of Mark's gospel, we shall see Jesus confronting the Jewish religious leaders concerning some of their ungodly customs.

### POINTS TO PONDER:

#### A. THE JEWS HELD MANY TRADITIONS THAT CONTRADICTED THE WORD OF GOD (V1-13)

- The Ritual of **Cleansing Hands** (v1-5) was based on the belief that eating with unwashed hands defiled a man. *Is this the truth?* See Matthew 15:20.
- They also held to the **Practice of Corban** (lit. "A gift devoted to God.") By using this word in a vow, a Jew could legally avoid giving financial support to his needy parents.

#### B. THE SOURCE OF DEFILEMENT COMES FROM THE HUMAN HEART (V14-23)

- To "defile" is to make unclean. The only way to be cleansed of sin is through the blood of Jesus Christ (1John 1:7-9).

#### C. JESUS GRANTS THE REQUEST OF A GENTILE WOMAN (V24-30)

- **Tyre** and **Sidon** were Gentile cities located on the Mediterranean coast (v24)
- "**Little dogs**" (v27) was not a derogatory term.
- We can learn much about prayer from the women of faith in the Bible (e.g. Hannah).

#### D. JESUS HEALS A MAN FROM DEAFNESS AND A SPEECH IMPEDIMENT (V31-37)

- Jesus ministered to this man in a very special way. Notice in this healing: (1). Jesus took the man aside; (2). He put His fingers in his ears and touched his tongue; (3). He looked up to heaven; (4). He sighed; (5). Finally, He said: "Ephphatha" (Be opened). The man was immediately healed!

### CHALLENGE TO CHANGE:

- *Test all things with the truth.* No human tradition should ever take preference over God's word.
- "*He has done all things well*" (v37). The people acknowledged Christ for His marvelous works. Do you regularly give God the praise for His works in your life and in the lives of others?