



The Gospel Of
MARK

The Gospel of Mark – Faith in Vain
Pastor Rich Harris 06.23.2024

USING THIS SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

We have provided all the Scriptures references in the sermon and some discussion questions for you to use to discuss the weekend message.

This Sermon Discussion Guide is only a tool to aid you in meeting the needs of your group. For most groups, there are too many questions to answer in one session together. Give priority to the needs and pace of your group members.

While the questions are important, remember your group's goal is to create an atmosphere that will foster true friendships. Use the discussion questions as you see fit but emphasize the relationships.

[Mark 7:1-5, ESV]

¹ Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, ² they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³ (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, ⁴ and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) ⁵ And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"

[Exodus 19:3-5, NLT]

³ Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants of Israel: ⁴ 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. ⁵ Now if you will obey

me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me.

[Mark 7:6-7, ESV]

⁶ And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁷ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’

[Ezekiel 14:2-3, NLT]

² this message came to me from the LORD: ³ Son of man, these leaders have set up idols in their hearts. They have embraced things that will make them fall into sin. Why should I listen to their requests?

A heart that's right with God...

1. Is sanctified by learning and obeying the Word of God.

[John 17:17, ESV]

Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

[Ephesians 5:25-27, NIV]

²⁵ ...Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

[John 14:21, NLT]

Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.

[1 John 2:4-6, NLT]

⁴ If someone claims, “I know God,” but doesn’t obey God’s commandments, that person is a liar and is not living in the truth. ⁵ But those who obey God’s word truly show how completely they love him. That is how we know we are living in him. ⁶ Those who say they live in God should live their lives as Jesus did.

[Titus 3:1-2, ESV]

¹ Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ² to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people.

A heart that's right with God...

2. Confesses sins to God and is spiritually born again.

[Mark 7:15, 21-23, NLT]

¹⁵ It's not what goes into your body that defiles you; you are defiled by what comes from your heart... 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."

[Titus 3:3-7, NLT]

³ Once we, too, were foolish and disobedient. We were misled and became slaves to many lusts and pleasures. Our lives were full of evil and envy, and we hated each other. ⁴ But – when God our Savior revealed his kindness and love, ⁵ 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. ⁶ He generously poured out the Spirit upon us through Jesus Christ our Savior. ⁷ Because of his grace he made us right in his sight and gave us confidence that we will inherit eternal life.

[1 John 1:9, NLT]

But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness.

Key Points:

A Heart That's Right with God...

1. Is sanctified by learning and obeying the Word of God.
2. Confesses sins to God and is spiritually born again.

Applications for the Week:

This week, ask God to reveal any areas in your life where you have elevated human traditions or rules above His commandments. Pray for the discernment to recognize these areas and the courage to realign your focus on God's Word. Ask God to guide you in applying the Bible in your daily life, ensuring that your actions reflect His heart and not just human expectations.

Discussion Questions

1. Reflect on your own life: Are there any traditions or practices you follow that might be more about human rules than God's commandments? How can you realign your focus?
2. Why did Jesus challenge the Pharisees and scribes about their adherence to human traditions in Mark 7:1-23? What was the underlying issue He was addressing?
3. What specific traditions were the Pharisees and scribes concerned about in Mark 7:1-23?
4. How does John 17:17 help us understand the importance of God's word in our spiritual growth and sanctification?
5. How can you incorporate regular Bible reading into your daily routine to ensure your faith is directed correctly? What specific steps will you take this week?
6. Think about a time when you might have judged someone based on human standards rather than God's truth. How can you change your approach to be more aligned with Jesus' teachings?
7. What does Ezekiel 14:2-3 reveal about the nature of idolatry and its impact on our relationship with God?
8. How can you guard against legalism and ensure that your worship and relationship with God are genuine and heartfelt? What practical actions can you take to avoid falling into the trap of superficial godliness?
9. Identify one personal conviction or tradition that you have elevated to the level of divine law. How can you adjust your perspective to ensure it aligns with God's word and not human standards?