

26-1018a - Detailed Summary

26-1018a - Traditions, Part 1, Mike Mathis

Bible Readers: John Kessler and Roger Raines

See the transcript: [Transcript HTML](#) - [Transcript PDF](#)

See the outline: [Outline HTML](#) - [Outline PDF](#) - [Mikes Outline PDF](#)

Traditions, Part 1

1st Reader (0:04 - 0:57): John Kessler

Mark 7:1-5: John read the first scripture for the morning from the gospel of mark, chapter 7, verses 1 through 5. The passage describes how the Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. The reading notes that the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash, and they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and kettles. The Pharisees and teachers of the law then asked Jesus why his disciples do not live according to the tradition of the

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elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands. John concluded the reading by affirming that this is the word of the Lord.

2nd Reader (1:01 - 1:45): Roger Raines

Mark 7:6-8: Roger continued the reading in the same chapter of mark, verses 6 through 8. He stated that Jesus said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'" The reading concludes with the statement that, neglecting the commandment of God, they hold the tradition of men. Roger closed by noting that this concludes the reading.

Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 28:39), Preacher: Mike Mathis

(1:50–6:05) Introduction: Defining Tradition and Biblical Transmission

Mike greeted everyone present at the building and those listening by phone, announcing that the lesson is on traditions. He recalled that the Bible class that morning had mentioned traditions and those handed down. Citing Webster's Third New International Dictionary, he defined a tradition as a process of handing down information, opinions, beliefs, and customs by word of mouth, noting that the dictionary also mentions scriptures. He observed that the Bible contains in written form what was originally handed down by word of mouth. Tracing the dispensations, he explained that in the patriarchal age God gave to the fathers the things he wanted, and the fathers handed down what God wanted, though there was not yet the written word. Later, Moses was told by God to write what God had instructed him. In Exodus 17:14 Moses wrote all the words of the Lord, and in one place it is said that he wrote all that God commanded him. Addressing those who question whether what is written in the Bible is truly infallible and whether mistakes could have been made along the way, Mike cited 2 Peter 1:20–21, which teaches that no prophecy of scripture is of any private interpretation. Prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. He noted that this is a different lesson and that he did not want to stray from the subject of traditions. He then announced that the first consideration would be men's traditions, as dealt with in Mark 7.

(6:05–14:09) Men’s Traditions: The Pharisees’ Challenge Concerning Unwashed Hands

Mike explained that the Pharisees and some of the scribes, the Jewish leaders of the time, came to Jesus and questioned him concerning unwashed hands. He shared a personal recollection from his teenage years when he was reading in Matthew about unwashed hands and found the account troubling. He noted that Matthew records the Pharisees questioning Jesus, but Mark 7 provides an explanation of what is meant by the religious leaders’ challenge to Jesus and his disciples on the matter of unwashed hands. When they saw some of his disciples eat bread with foul, that is, unwashed hands, in a special way, they were holding the tradition of the elders. Mike emphasized that this was the tradition of the elders—what they were doing was not from God but from them. He clarified that in and of itself what they were doing would not be wrong simply because it came from them; the wrongness lay in why they were doing it. Quoting the Tree of Life Version of Mark 7:3, he noted that the Pharisees and all Jewish people do not eat unless they wash their hands up to the elbows. He remarked that this is curious, affirming that it is correct to wash hands and keep them clean, but not for the reason they were doing so. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they perform a ritual washing, and they hold many other traditions such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and copper vessels. They went through this ritual. Mike observed that washing up to the elbows is curious, since one picks up food with the hands, not the elbows. He believes the disciples did wash their hands, but they did not go through the rituals the Jewish people practiced. When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash, and they hold many other things such as the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and kettles. They were really clean, and in and of itself that would be all right. While they were doing this, the Pharisees and scribes asked why his disciples do not walk according to the tradition of the elders. Mike asked the congregation to think about where the tradition of the elders comes from and who the elders are—they are men. According to them, the disciples had not gone through the ritual before eating. Jesus answered and said to them that Isaiah prophesied well of them hypocrites, as it is written: “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.” For laying aside the commandment of God, they hold the tradition of men—the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things they do.

(14:09–18:06) The Corban Tradition and Nullifying God’s Commandment

Mike continued by noting that Jesus got to them on this point, saying that all too well they reject the commandments of God that they may keep their tradition. He then turned to what the word of God says, written in the Ten Commandments as law. For Moses said, “Honor your father and mother,” and “He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.” Mike observed that sometimes when it comes to children honoring father and mother, or as Ephesians 6:1 says, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord,” the word children here could refer to little children, but in this context it is a man who dishonors his father or mother, and he who curses father or mother is to be put to death. This is what was issued from the mouth of God to these people. The Pharisees, however, thought of a way of circumventing this law. They say that if a man says to his father or mother, “Whatever profit you may have received from me is Corban,” that is, a gift to God. Mike explained that this occurs when father and mother have grown elderly and the son or daughter should be taking care of them. The Pharisees come along and say that if what one could have given them is given as a gift to God, then one no longer lets him do anything for his father or mother, because what he would have given to help them he is not helping them with. Therefore they make the word of God of no effect through the tradition which they have handed down, and they do many such things.

(18:06–25:30) What Truly Defiles a Man: From the Heart, Not External Ritual

Mike stated that there is one more thing to consider: the reason behind all this ceremonial cleansing that the Jewish leaders have passed down and that the Jewish people are going through. Beginning in verse 17, Jesus called the multitude to himself and said to them, “Hear me, everyone, and understand: there is nothing that enters a man from the outside which can defile him, but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile him. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” This is Jesus speaking to the people. Jesus is God’s Son, and he said to them that the ritual does not defile. They were thinking that if they do not really clean up and if they touch a piece of food that goes into their mouth, it is going to defile them. That is what they were saying about eating bread with foul, unwashed hands—they found fault. To have clean hands is to wash hands; one does not have to go up to the elbows, just wash and clean the hands. When Jesus had entered a house away from the crowd, his disciples asked him concerning the parable he had just spoken about nothing that enters a man from outside defiling him, but what comes out of him. He said to them, “Are you thus without understanding also? Do you not perceive that whatever enters a man from outside cannot defile him? Because it does not enter his heart, but his stomach, and is eliminated, thus purifying all foods.” He said that what comes out of a man defiles a man, and he listed what comes out: from within, out of the heart, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man. Mike applied this by noting that we keep our hands clean to keep the germs that may be around from giving somebody else the germs that may be on our hands. Nevertheless, if we do get a disease or a malady, those things are not defiling a man; it is the evilness that comes from the heart that defiles him. What really defiles a man is sin—these evil things. One may get sick or have a disease, but that disease is not defiling the man; it is making one sick or not good. Cleanliness is a lot better, yet Jesus says one is not defiling oneself by not going through that ritual. They may be thinking they will be defiled if they do not really clean themselves up. From the Old Testament there were rites before they entered the tabernacle; they had to wash themselves before they handled the sacrifices. God did not issue all this; it was not handed down from God. It was originally from the Jewish leaders. It was from them, and that is what made this wrong. Jesus was correcting that.

(25:30–28:39) Preview of Part Two and Gospel Invitation

Mike announced that this is part one of the lesson and that he will have part two, which will still consider traditions but will examine what the apostles laid out in the Word, and especially the traditions that Paul laid out for the church to do and for Christians to comply with. He then gave the invitation: if there is anyone who has not made Christ their own and has not come to Christ, Jesus said that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. In Acts 2:38, when the people asked what they should do, Peter told them to repent and be baptized, every one of them, for the remission of sins, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. If one has not done so, one must believe and be baptized, repent and be baptized—believe, repent, and be baptized. This is how to get into salvation. Once we are saved from our sins, we must continue to be faithful unto death, as stated in Revelation 2:10. We need to continue to be faithful. What we need to watch out for is what man hands down as if they are the commandments of God. We need to stick with the word of God to make sure that we know what is from God and what is really man-made. Mike closed by inviting anyone subject in any way to the gospel invitation to come now while the congregation stands and prays.