

Jan 13th 2008: Mark 7:1-23 : Jesus Speaks Against Hypocrisy

I must admit to struggling a little.....when 1st looked... passage of Scripture from Mark 7
But I knew that I was on the right track.....because it's about hypocrisy.....and the new sign

But the difficulty I faced.....was that my preconception of a hypocrite

Seemed not to fit in.....with the way Jesus speaks here

For I see a hypocrite as a personwho blatantly lives
two contradicting lives

*Then there's the tale told about this old hill billy who came down from the Carolina mountains
one day.....(1001 humourous illustrations no.478)*

BUT MORE SERIOUS THAN THAT.....true story

*of a TV Evangelist in the StatesEventually he got sacked.....because the gay prostitute
He knew he was a hypocrite.....but week after week he got away with it....Why change?*

Now that's hypocrisy....and it annoys everyone of us

- **But the hypocrisy that Jesus attacks.....is a lot more subtle**

In fact when we study the incident that led up to the outburst of Jesus against the Pharisees

We can imagine that they were absolutely surprised.....to be labeled as hypocrites

You see the Pharisees were predominantly sincere and dedicated

Extremely religious.....they saw themselves as the champions of all that was good.

They believed they had the God given right....of keeping the rest of.....on track as far as keeping

- So when they asked Jesus in 7:5

*“Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders
instead of eating their food with unclean hands?”*

As far as they were concerned.....**just doing their job**

→ That they could have a go at Jesus.....was a bonus!

- **His reaction was powerful**...and I believe it would have left them speechless and embarrassed
Look at v6-8

“Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

‘These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.’

Now of course what Jesus said was true.....But they didn't realise that....Didn't want to accept

Strong tradition.....Being the good guys

Over the centuries.....the Pharisees had added so much of their own interpretations

Additions..... to the basic requirements of God....

That what God wanted..... had been replaced by what they decided that God wanted

Jesus said:

“You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men”

They didn't see it like that.....

As far as they were concerned they were pleasing God

→by being so industrious about being religious.....about keeping the law better than others
And they enjoyed the position and authority this gave them

On top of this.....they enjoyed using.....to satisfy the baser tendencies.....their own nature

They slanted some of the rules in their own favour...like the example Jesus gave.....

And thro that...they gained power because of the wealth that flowed into the Temple....

- **So they had power...positionauthority**

...and believed themselves to be so good....so righteous.....despite their arrogance...greed

And Jesus said.....You are just fooling yourselves

SO Jesus gave to those Pharisees God's assessment.....Wasn't very pleasant

Mark gives us the tame version.....Matthew prevents us with the uncut version in Matt 23

In v13 Jesus says to them: “Woe to you teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites”

And then repeats that same phrase..._.....5 more times

- **They thought they were ok.....**because they did so much religious stuff

But their hearts were far from God.....and therefore their behaviourwas out of tune

And their attitude to others....was not the love of God.....Even ended up crucifying

Queen Mary

It was because of their hypocrisymissed what God was doing in their midst...again and

We have an example of that here:

Mark 6 ends with an account of all the wonderful things Jesus was doing

But what did the Pharisees see??.....His disciples not doing the ritual cleaning.....before they ate

Here surely is one of the saddest result of their hypocrisy

Despite all they did as far as religious rule keeping.....**They** neither recognized the saviour
Nor felt that they needed Him

Look again at those words Jesus quoted from Isaiah: *“These people honour me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain.”*

- **How sad for anyone**....to reach the end of this life.....only to be told that all our worship.... All our good acts.....Have been in vain.....Because we never truly opened our hearts to Jesus

Have you truly opened your heart to Jesus?...Because being in a real....doesn't depend upon..

And if so.....**Is your relationship with Him..... GROWING stronger & deeper...**
Or is it fading into a religiosity that is based on

In the Greek ...hypocrite also meant ...**Wearing a mask**...Pretending to be what you are not..

We can avoid the danger.....of our relationship.....Deteriorating into a religious mask that
By pursuing the fruit of that real relationship

By seeking daily:

- **The joy of sensing Him** speaking to you.....as you read.....pray.....hear His Word
- **The blessing of seeing Him** at work.....in your life or others.....and thanking Him
- **The excitement of being** obedient to his call....of ministering in His name
- **And the power of the HS within**.....constantly enabling you to love....and to call Him Father