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Mark 6:30 - 7:16



Gospel of Mark - Steve Gregg

In Mark 6:30 - 7:16, Jesus sends out his apostles and performs the miracle of feeding the 5,000 with just five loaves and two fish. The feeding of the 5,000 is significant in that it is recorded in all four gospels, and is associated with the tradition of the Messiah bringing bread to feed the multitudes. In his teaching, Jesus criticizes the Jewish leaders for prioritizing human traditions over the commandments of God, and emphasizes the importance of honoring and supporting parents. He also teaches that defilement comes from within, from one's heart and mind, rather than from what enters the body.

Transcript

All right, we're looking at Mark 6, verse 30. Then the apostles gathered to Jesus and told him all things, both what they had done and what they had taught. So they come back now from the feeding, from the outreach that they've been on.

We don't have actually details given of anything they did while they were gone, but they came back and told Jesus those details, though they're not recorded for us. All we know about the time they were gone is that during that time, Herod seemed to become alarmed because he thought maybe these miracles he was hearing about were evidence that John the Baptist had come back to life. But we've had Jesus sending out the twelve, and now they come back from that outreach.

And that outreach apparently stirred up a great interest in Jesus, because it was at this point that the largest crowd seemed to come and throng Jesus briefly for one day, basically. Many of them dispersed the next day, as we know from the Gospel of John. But this is the time when he fed the five thousand.

And when we say five thousand, the Bible specifically says five thousand men, not including women and children. So when you add women and children to the mix, it was probably well over ten thousand, maybe fifteen thousand or more. And we do not read of Jesus ever having quite so many people following him at any other time prior to this or afterward.

And so it would appear that the activities of the twelve out among the villages of Galilee

had stirred up a great deal of interest in the kingdom of God and in Jesus. And the miracles that were done. So as the disciples came back to meet with Jesus again, apparently people from the regions where they had taught, probably those that at least were available and had the flexibility probably came also where Jesus was to see him with their own eyes, whom they'd only heard about through these disciples ministry.

Anyway, that's what I think is the case in all all the Gospels, the feeding of the synoptics, at least the feeding of the five thousand follows the sending out of the twelve and their return. So they return and apparently with them return a large multitude of people. And they report to Jesus all the things, both what they had done and what they had taught.

And he said to them in verse thirty one, come aside by yourselves to a deserted place and rest a while, for it says there were many coming and going and they did not even have time to eat. So Jesus realized that after their outreach, however long it had been, it had apparently been hectic. And so he says, let's take some time out, we'll find a place where we just go kind of camp out for the weekend and get some refreshment.

And to do that, they figured they better cross the Sea of Galilee, because anywhere they would go on foot, they could be followed on foot. And so they departed to a deserted place in the boat by themselves. But the multitude saw them departing and many knew him, that is, they recognized him there in the boat and they ran there on foot from all the cities.

They arrived before them and came together to him. Now, we don't know how far he went in the boat. If he went straight across the lake, that's quite a distance.

And the distance that people had to run around the northern end of the lake to get on the other side before his boat got there would be a considerable distance. But since Jesus wasn't specifically saying they're going to cross the lake, they're just looking for a private deserted place. They may have skirted the shore to some place that they had in mind where they figured there wouldn't be a lot of people.

But when they got there, it turned out there were a lot of people because the people were able to see them going and followed along the shore on foot. And they arrived before Jesus got there. And so when Jesus got there, he saw a great multitude and was moved with compassion for them because they were like sheep having a shepherd, not having a shepherd.

Excuse me. So he began to teach them many things. So Jesus really was looking for some retirement.

He's really looking for some privacy. And the people didn't give him that. But he had compassion when he saw that their hunger, they were like sheep that weren't being shepherded by the religious establishment.

The leaders of Israel in the Old Testament were often referred to as shepherds of Israel because it was a common image in the Old Testament that Israel was God's flock. God was the shepherd and Israel was the flock. But but also that the people that God put in charge of Israel, the rulers, the priests and so forth, they were like the shepherds.

But many times the prophets point out the shepherds were really not very good shepherds. They didn't do what shepherds should do. And at times God was very angry with them.

And in Ezekiel 34, verse two, God says, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, thus says the Lord God to the shepherds. Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves. Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? And he goes on to talk about how the leaders have abused the people and exploited the people and oppressed them, which is not what shepherds should do to sheep.

Now, at the time Jesus came, there were shepherds, there were priests, there were rabbis, there were rulers of the people, but they weren't shepherding the people. They weren't feeding the flocks. They were looking out for themselves.

And therefore, the people were like hungry sheep without anyone to really care about them. And Jesus was the good shepherd. And so he couldn't help.

He was not a hireling who just punched the clock and said, well, I'm sorry, guys, it's my day off. But he was the true shepherd. He had a shepherd's heart and seeing that these people were like sheep in need of a shepherd.

He gave up his plans for privacy and for relaxation and spent the day teaching them. And when the day was now far spent, verse thirty five, his disciples came to him and said, this is a deserted place and already the hour is late. Send them away that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy themselves bread for they have nothing to eat.

But he answered and said to them, you give them something to eat. And they said to him, shall we go and buy 200 denarii worth of bread to give them something to eat? Now, a denarius was a day's wage for a laborer. So one of the disciples calculated how many people there were and how much it would cost.

It actually would take if there's 300 working days in a week, in a year, excuse me, then 200 would be like, you know, eight months worth of income for a laboring man. And that's what 200 denarii would be. And they calculated what we'd need.

Well, what would that be today? I mean, let's say a common laborer makes what they make today in America, 30,000, 40,000, something like that, maybe. Let's say it was 30,000, then eight months worth of wage would be 20,000. That's conservative.

I mean, I think in our country, 30,000 dollars is. A little below middle class, I'm not sure, maybe it is middle class, but the point is, if a laborer in this country makes 30,000 dollars, then then we're talking about something like the equivalent of 20,000 dollars they thought it would cost to feed these 5,000 people like four bucks ahead. Well, not really.

That's just for the men. If there were 15 or 20,000 people, it could be a dollar ahead by today's figuring. Anyway, this is just a mental calculation.

One of the disciples did to try to figure out how much they would need to feed them and to present to Jesus a figure that was so unreasonable. We don't have money. We don't have food.

It would take not just food to take a lot of food, take a lot of money to get enough food to feed these people. They should go and take care of themselves, go back, send them away so they can go and get food for themselves. But he said to them, how many loaves do you have? Go and see.

And they found out and they said five and two fish. Now, this exchange between Jesus and his disciples is a little different than the way it's recorded by John. In John, chapter six.

And by the way, this feeding of the five thousand is the only miracle of Jesus that's recorded in all four gospels. Many of the miracles are found in the synoptic gospels, but not in John. And then almost all the miracles in John are absent from the synoptic gospels.

There's not much overlap, but there's this one overlap, this one miracle. This miracle, for some reason, is considered to be very significant because afterward it's even alluded to as like the disciples. Didn't you learn the don't you remember the didn't you learn the lesson of the loaves? Don't you remember? As if this miracle had some deep meaning sufficient for even John, who definitely is sparse in his relating of miracles of Jesus and only includes the ones that he thinks have some deep spiritual meaning.

He even includes it. But in John's record of this. Just the conversation between Jesus is recorded a little differently.

And I would just point this out because you may encounter this on your own, because here it says in John, chapter six. This business of the people eating didn't start with the disciples asking Jesus to send the people away necessarily, or maybe it did. We don't know what was said first, but we read of Jesus speaking to one of the disciples.

It says in verse five, he said to Philip, where should we buy bread that these may eat? It sounds like Jesus is the one who raised the question. Of the people's hunger, it's probably at this point that the disciples said to Jesus, you should send them away. This is

a deserted place.

You send away so they can buy food for themselves. And in verse seven, Philip answered him. Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them would even have a little.

So he's the man who did the calculations and announced that amount of money he thought it would cost. Now, in Mark's gospel, it says that Jesus said, well, how many loaves do you have? Go and see. Well, in John, it tells what they found out when they went and saw.

See, these two accounts seem to supplement each other. Because it says in verse nine, there's a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many? So it would appear that Jesus may have raised the subject, although Mark doesn't bring that up. He to say to the disciples, where can we buy food for these people? And so I think you can mesh the two stories and see that both conversations happen.

But we have part of the conversation recorded by each of the witnesses. In this case, Peter, who's behind Mark's gospel, specifically just tells us that the disciples suggested sending the people away to find food for themselves. He doesn't tell us, as John does, that Jesus had raised the point of buying food for them.

And the disciples apparently countered by saying, I think you better send these people out to find their own food. We don't have the money. And then Jesus is the one who said, well, go find out how much food you've got.

And then one of the disciples found a boy who had some fishes and loaves and brought them to Jesus. So that's all compressed a little differently in Mark. But it's but certainly all those things can fit into the narrative.

It's easily harmonized. Now, back in Mark six, verse thirty nine, then he commanded them to make them all sit down in groups on the green grass. So they sat down in ranks in hundreds and fifties.

And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, blessed and broke the loaves and gave them to his disciples to set before them. And the two fish he divided among them all. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of fragments and of the fish.

Now, those who had eaten the loaves were about five thousand men. And one of the other gospels mentions not including women and children, which is also implied simply by saying five thousand men. So here's this miracle.

There's actually going to be another one a little later where he feeds four thousand. But

this one is the one that all the gospels record. And it is apparently very significant.

According to John, this led to the people wanting to forcibly make Jesus their king, says that in John six, 15, after he fed the multitudes, it says when Jesus saw that the people wanted to come and make him a king by force. He sent the disciples in the boat across the lake and sent the crowd away and went up into a mountain himself to pray. Now, that response of the crowd is not mentioned here, but in verse forty five, it just says immediately he made his disciples get into a boat and go before him to the other side to Bethsaida while he sent the multitude away.

Mark doesn't tell us, as John does, that he sent the multitude away because there's getting to be this this probably unruly fervor among the people that they're going to carry Jesus to Jerusalem and as their king and try to overthrow the Roman powers and put Jesus in his place. Now, why would they do that? Well, possibly because. They saw this multiplication of the bread as something spiritually significant.

Because the Jews did have a tradition among themselves that when the Messiah would come, he would bring bread and feed the multitude is actually the background for that tradition was that when the temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in five, eight, six B.C., the Jews believed that Jeremiah rescued the ark before the temple was destroyed, how he would have done so is very difficult to imagine, since he would have to get past the priests and so forth and get into the holy of holies and get the ark. The tradition doesn't have any solid basis necessarily, but the Jews believe that Jeremiah had rescued the ark and taken it down to Egypt when he went down there and that it was hidden in a place that no one would find until the Messiah comes. But they believe that when the Messianic age would come, Jeremiah would reappear with the ark and in the ark is this part of manna and that he would open the part of manna and miraculously feed the multitudes from the manna.

Now, this is strictly kind of a superstitious tradition of the Jews, but it was nonetheless in their minds so that later at Caesarea Philippi, Jesus says to the disciples who men say I am. And they say some say you're Elijah, some say you're one of the prophets, some say you're Jeremiah. So in Matthew, it says in Matthew 16, some say you're Jeremiah.

So it's possible that when Jesus fed the multitudes, that they associated this in their minds with the Messianic age being announced and that he might be Jeremiah or a mixture of Jeremiah and the Messiah, who knows what they thought, but they were excited. Now, I think that what Jesus said in conversation to them the next day, which John records, but the other gospels do not may tell us more why they were so excited about Jesus. She said, you came because your bellies were filled.

They like the idea of not having to farm, not having to work, just having someone around who can take a little bit of bread and feed the whole nation with it. And, you know, that sounded like an economic boon to them. So I think that may have motivated the

conversation Jesus had with these people.

The next day is not recorded, except in John's gospel. And there he seems to give some of the significance of this miracle by saying that he's the bread that comes down from heaven. Now, he may have just used this miracle as an opportunity to bring that up, or it may be that this miracle itself is an illustration of the fact that Jesus is the bread of life.

But that's not brought out here. All we have here is that immediately he made his disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side. Now, I want to clarify before we depart from our consideration of this particular story.

That there are those who try to find natural explanations for the miracles of Jesus, and sometimes the natural explanations may seem to be possible in light of the wording of the passage. For example, one somewhat liberal commentator said that Jesus didn't walk on the water, but what the Bible says, the disciples saw him walking on the sea. And there is a place in John 21 where it talks about Jesus walking on the sea, where it means on the seashore, walking along the edge of the sea.

And the expression walking on the sea is used where he's not really walking on water, he's walking on the shore. And they say the story of Jesus walking in the water, we're not to understand that he did a miracle there, but he was just walking on the seashore. And so sometimes they try to find ways to remove the miraculous element from the story, but by still observing the words of the passage.

And on this story, it's very common for liberal people to say Jesus didn't really do a miracle here, at least not the kind of miracle most people think. Maybe a much more important kind of miracle. They say that here's all these people who had come and they say it was customary for people to bring their own food with them when they traveled.

And therefore, they had bread and fish and so forth that they brought with them, but they were hidden within the folds of their robes. And although they were getting hungry, they didn't want to bring out the food they brought because others would want it, because, you know, everyone was hungry. There's too many people there.

They you know, people were stingy. They didn't want to share their food. And so even though they were hungry and had food with them, they didn't want to bring it out where people would see it because people would ask for some of that because they were hungry.

And so people, by their selfishness, were not sharing what they had. And then they say when this young boy shared his lunch and Jesus, you know, held it up and made a spectacle of it and start breaking it and distributing it, that he set such an inspiring example that people thought, well, shucks, I have to share mine too. And so they pulled their food out and everyone pulled out their food and everyone was handing the food

around.

And before long, it was just a big love feast. And this is what people there's commentators that frequently bring this point up that maybe it wasn't so much a miracle of breaking the loaves, but maybe it was a miracle breaking people's hearts, making them less selfish, making them more compassionate toward the people around them. The example of this little boy and so forth.

Well, if that's so, then they should have made the little boy king, not Jesus. I mean, if he had the power to inspire people to be so loving and that's what impressed people, then why make Jesus king? It's the little boy who shares lunch, not Jesus. It's obvious that the story, as it is retold without the miraculous element, does not explain the reaction of the people at all.

And the people were amazed when Jesus did that, and that's why they wanted to recognize him as the Messiah. It's not that Jesus simply inspired people to share what they had. And look at verse 36 here, the disciples said to Jesus, send them away that they may go to the surrounding country and villages to buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat.

They didn't say they're not sharing the food they brought with them, they don't have anything to eat. These people had come and followed Jesus around the lake, kind of on short notice. They saw him taken off in the boat.

They didn't want to let him out of their sight. They didn't stop and go to the store or go home and pack a sack lunch. They just ran to the other side of the lake to be there when he would get there.

And they didn't bring anything with them. When people say, well, people customarily carried food with them. Really? How do we know that? The disciples should have known that if that was a custom.

If people carried food with them, then why would the disciples say they have nothing to eat? It seems obvious that this was a miracle, regardless how many scholars try to explain their way without the miraculous element. So the disciples are sent away across the sea, but Jesus stays on that in that one spot briefly. And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray.

Now, when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea and he was alone on the land. I believe in John's gospel tells us how far the boat was from him, two or three miles from the shore that they'd left. So it was in the middle of the Sea of Galilee and Jesus was alone on a mountain where he'd been praying.

Apparently, it's a very clear night, but a windy one is a windy night. But apparently the wind had blown away the clouds near Passover time. It could have been a full moon.

Jesus could see from the mountain where he's sitting. He could see the disciples. They're a couple of miles out, but he could still see the little speck of their boat in the moonlight, in the clear sky.

And he could see they were struggling. They weren't getting across the sea very quickly because the wind was contrary to them. That's what we read here.

It says, verse 48, and he saw them straining at rowing for the wind was against them. And about the fourth watch of the night, which would be between three and six in the morning, he came to them walking on the sea. And would have passed by them, but they saw him walking on the sea and supposed it was a ghost and they cried out for they all saw him and were troubled.

And immediately he talked with them and said to them, be of good cheer. It is I do not be afraid. Then he went up into the boat to them and the wind ceased.

And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure and marveled, for they had not understood about the loads because their heart was hard. Now, this is the case where I say one competitor wants us to think that Jesus came to them walking on the seashore. Now, if they were so close to the seashore, why did they have to strain at the oars? Why did the Bible says they were two or three miles out? And why would a man walking on the seashore spook them? Men walk on the seashore quite frequently.

They thought it was a ghost. Why? Because he was walking on water. In the book of Job, we saw when we studied it, that it says that Yahweh is the one who walks on the waves.

And Jesus was demonstrating himself in this case, as in an earlier case that they had seen when he stilled the storm. Yahweh is also the one who commands the winds and the waves and they obey him. And Jesus was showing that he was God, really, that he does the things that the Old Testament says only God can do.

But when he got into the boat, the wind ceased, so he stilled the storm, as it were. And they were greatly amazed and they marveled. They would not have marveled and been amazed if he had not been walking on the water, I think, in this instance, if he was just walking on the shore.

And they had not understood, it says, the loaves. What is there to understand about the loaves? It says their hearts were hardened. Now, hardness of heart in the Gospels refers to being dull, spiritually dull and missing something.

Not long after this, there is a time when Jesus is with the disciples and he tells them to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod. This is in chapter eight, verse 15. And they misunderstood him and thought that he's referring to the fact that they had neglected to get bread for their journey, which was an oversight of their part.

They're embarrassed about it. And then he says, why are you thinking that way? And he says in verse 17, do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? Having eyes, do you not see? Having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember when I broke the five loaves for the five thousand? How many baskets full of fragments did you take up? And they said twelve. And when I broke the seven for the four thousand, which is a story we find earlier in chapter eight.

How many large baskets full of fragments did you take up? They said seven. So he said to them, how is it you do not understand now this comment? Do you not see? Do you still not perceive? Why don't you understand? And also here in chapter six, verse 52, they had not understood about the loaves. Their hearts were hardened.

Both of these places talk about their hearts being hardened and not really getting the message about the loaves, about the feeding of the five thousand and later of the four thousand also. What was the message they weren't getting? Now, I have to say there may be a very simple answer to this. I've always kind of thought the way it's worded, it sounds more mysterious and there should be some very profound answer, like there's a really mysterious message kind of hidden in this miracle that they were too dull to see.

And, you know, he wanted to call their attention to it. And Mark mentions that, oh, they didn't understand about the loaves. Well, what was it they didn't understand? Well, I really don't know what they didn't understand, unless it's a simple thing.

I can think of a simple thing, but I can't think of a especially profound thing, necessarily. I mean, the simple thing is profound in a sense, but it's not so exceptional vis-a-vis the other things Jesus did. It would simply be saying that in breaking those, he proved himself to be the Messiah.

He proved himself to have supernatural powers. And therefore, they shouldn't be so amazed that he could walk on the water or that he could still the storm. And they were amazed because they didn't understand about the loaves.

But see, it sounds like it should be saying they didn't understand about Jesus. You know, they didn't understand who he was or something like that. It doesn't seem like the miracle of the loaves was a miracle so much greater than, say, raising Jairus's daughter or healing a leper with a touch or healing multitudes.

The disciples say, you know, I'm not sure why the loaves, the feeding of the five thousand is singled out as being the thing that should have clued them in. The thing that they should have understood, which would have kept them from being amazed in this situation. Maybe it's just mentioned because it was the most recent thing they'd seen.

After all, it was the only miracle they'd seen since they'd come back from their outreach. And maybe just because it was the most recent miracle, it should have been fresh in

their minds. I mean, why why wouldn't they, having just seen Jesus multiply the loaves, why wouldn't they have it graphically portrayed to them that that he was able to do supernatural things so that his walking on the water and stilling storm would not amaze them so much? I have to say that I don't know the answer to that.

And I've looked in commentators over the years, including today, and commentators kind of pass over it without much insight. So it's either something very deep that I have yet to understand, and there are things in the Bible very deep that I have yet to understand. And in a way, I'm kind of glad of that because it's so much fun to finally, after years of wondering, finally see something that you didn't understand before and say, wow, that's what that is about.

Like when the light goes on and you get kind of revelation about something, you've hopefully had those experiences in your own study. I've had lots of cases like that. And it's enjoyable.

And when there's something I don't think it seems like there's more there, but I can't figure out what it is. It's kind of encouraging, well, maybe something can have one of those aha moments. So the light's going to go on.

I'll see something new and exciting that I that I still don't know. And maybe there is. So, you know, again, I think the only obvious thing, the only thing obvious to me at my dull state and looking at this is that they didn't understand the loaves, that is, they weren't considering the miracle they'd just seen was a fresh demonstration of Jesus miraculous power.

And therefore, why should they be astonished a few hours later to see him do another supernatural thing? But again, if that's really the only thing that Mark is saying here, then I'm not I'm not sure why he didn't say they didn't understand the miracles in general or they weren't getting the message about who Jesus was. But they didn't understand about the loaves as if when Jesus did the thing with the loaves, this was like to be a sign they're supposed to get something and they're dull of hearing. So they're not getting it.

Anyway, I leave that unanswered because I don't know the answer. Although it's been something of interest to me for many, many years, I just have not really figured out if it means something more than that simple thing. Now, some child may read it and immediately get what I'm not getting.

Maybe some of you know it, but yeah, it's one of those things remains a little bit opaque to me. Verse fifty three, when they crossed over, they came to the land of the of Janessa and anchored there. And when they came out of the boat, immediately the people recognized him and ran through that whole surrounding region and began to carry about on beds.

Those who were sick. To wherever they heard he was, wherever he entered into villages, cities or the country. They laid the sick in the marketplace and begged him that he might just touch the border of his garment, that they might.

And as many as touched him were made well. Now, this only tells us about his return to the other side of the Sea of Galilee and there the people bringing the sick to him and so forth, as they did everywhere. He went this this these few verses probably summarized what was a fairly common situation whenever Jesus went anywhere these days.

People all brought their sick. It's not like this is unusual for him at this point in his ministry. But Mark and the other synoptics leave out an important thing, which which John does include.

And that is that when Jesus did get on the other side of the lake that next day, the people came to him again. And he said that the only reason they were looking for him now is that they had eaten their bread that he had given them and they wanted another meal. And they and they got into a dialogue with him, which was eventually very offensive to them.

And that was the bread of life dialogue where Jesus said, I'm the bread from heaven. You got to eat my flesh and drink my blood or you'll have no life in you. This is all in John chapter six.

The next day after the feeding of the five thousand. And there's this long discourse of Jesus that's intermixed with their confusing comments. I mean, they're confused comments and they're getting, you know, not understanding him and getting offended.

And by the end of chapter six of John, it says in verse sixty six that from that day forward, many of his disciples departed and didn't walk with him anymore. Just because of this, this was a turning point in his ministry. There's a sense in which his ministry kind of collapsed at that point.

Not that he didn't regather crowds everywhere he went, but he had had thousands of people following the day before. And many of the people, including many of his disciples, were told didn't continue to follow him after that. And that was the occasion when he turned to the despondent disciples, the twelve and said, will you also go away? And they said, and Peter said, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.

All of that's in John chapter six. But apparently at that time, which was the next day after the feeding of the five thousand, there were these people from other regions brought there sick to Jesus still. And there is still plenty for him to do now.

Chapter seven. Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to him, having come from Jerusalem. Now, when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault for the Pharisees and all the Jews

do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders when they come in from the marketplace.

They do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups and pitchers and copper vessels and couches. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but they eat bread with unwashed hands? Now, we have to understand that the objection here was not what your mother would object to.

If you came in from outside with dirty hands and came right to the dinner table and didn't eat, your mother would say you should wash your hands, which you should because of, you know, germs, because of the danger that you will, you know, take, you will ingest with your food something that's on your hands that shouldn't go into your body that got on there when you're outdoors. But usually it's referring to microscopic stuff, stuff they didn't even know existed in those days. In fact, people didn't know that these microscopic organisms that are deleterious to our health exist until the days of pastures just a few hundred years ago.

In biblical times, they didn't have a connection in their mind. They made between eating dirty food and getting sick. They didn't understand the germ theory of sickness.

So why did they wash their hands? It was entirely symbolic. It was entirely a matter of being symbolically clean. You.

When you go out in the marketplace, you touch things that might have been touched by Gentiles. It's even possible that the wind from Samaria has blown across Samaria and then into your land, and you've been blown by the same wind that blew on Samaritans. And you just can't go outdoors and come back in again without contacting some kind of defilement like this.

Now, this is not according to the law of Moses. The law of Moses had nothing about these kinds of washings. Now, the idea of washing is found in the law of Moses in cases where they do really contract genuine defilement.

When a person is a leper, when a person is a woman is on a menstrual cycle, a man has a wet dream, a person has gone to a funeral, they've come close to a dead body. These are the kinds of things that made people unclean for a period of time, either until sundown or for a week, but only at the end of that period of defilement. If it was a one day thing, then it was at the end of that day.

If it was a one week thing, it was at the end of that week. They were to wash themselves and wash their clothes. That was just the emblem of putting the defilement of that event behind them.

But they didn't wash every time they came into the house. I mean, the law didn't require that. People were not defiled every day.

It was the unusual circumstance. I mean, leprosy doesn't happen to everyone. Going to a funeral, you don't go to funerals all the time.

It was that unusual circumstance that could bring defilement, which was then ceremonially ended with a washing, a washing of the body and of the clothes. That's the only washing that the law itself ever required. The Jews, however, had developed this more because they had come up with all kinds of ways a person might be defiled.

Like I said, the wind blowing from Samaria and hitting you would defile them. Well, there's certainly nothing in the Bible that would support that. But that was what the rabbis came up with.

And, you know, a lot of things, having a Gentile brush against you in the marketplace would defile you. There's nothing in the Old Testament that says you're defiled if you touch a Gentile. This was simply the Jewish bigotry that had developed through their religious isolationism and their sense of being superior to the Gentiles and things like that.

There was actually nothing in the Old Testament that would support these ideas. But it was the attitude that the rabbis had inculcated in the pious of Jesus' time. And so they just felt like so many things could defile you, you better just wash all the time.

You better wash your hands. You better wash your head. You better wash your couch you sit on.

You better wash the cups you drink from. Now, we do some of those things because, you know, we understand a dirty cup. You can get sick from that.

But that's not what they were thinking. It was more about their religious ideas of defilement. And interestingly, Mark describes those customs for his reader in verses three and four.

He mentions the Jews do this kind of thing. Now, Matthew tells the same story in Matthew, chapter 15, and he doesn't give that explanation. He just mentions that Jesus' disciples were criticized because they didn't wash.

And then he goes on with the story. But that's because Matthew is writing to a Jewish audience. The Jews know these customs.

And so Matthew didn't have to acquaint his readers with the customs. He just tells the story. He doesn't have to explain, well, this is what Jews do.

Matthew's readers were Jews. They knew what Jews do. Mark's readers were probably in

Rome, probably Gentiles.

And therefore, they wouldn't understand why Jesus' disciples would be criticized for not washing. So Mark has to give as an aside, well, you have to understand the Jews have these customs. And so he describes their customary washing.

And so the criticism is made of Jesus' disciples, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? Notice the tradition of the elders. That's what the rabbis had been teaching for the past generations. Not what Moses had said, but the traditions of the elders in that they eat bread with unwashed hands.

And he answered and said to them, well, did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites as it is written? Now, he quotes from Isaiah chapter twenty nine, and Mark doesn't quote as much of it as Matthew does. In Matthew's gospel before the part that is recorded here, this people honors me with their lips. There's an earlier part that is in Matthew fifteen eight, where it says these people draw near to me with their mouth.

That's how it's worded there, sort of similar, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. So verbally, they talk like they love God. Verbally, they express their worship to God, but their hearts far from him.

Now, it's interesting that Jesus would say this about he's quoting Isaiah, but he's saying it, affirming this to be true. Because in Matthew twelve, Jesus said, out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks and men will be judged by every idle word that proceeds out of their mouth because their words reflect what's in their heart. Now I point out, well, not always in this case, their words are good, but their heart's not good.

You see, that's why Jesus said that people be judged by every idle or every careless word that they speak. The careless words you speak will show what's really in your heart, but the careful words, the words where you're being careful to impress people, to say the right things in the right company. Those don't always reflect what's in your heart.

And in their case, they said the right things in public worship, but their hearts were elsewhere, far from God. And he says in verse seven, in vain they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. That's Isaiah 29, 13.

Now, the part that Jesus is going to amplify is this part. They worship God in vain because they are teaching as doctrines, that is, as official religious teachings, things that are really man made origin, traditions, commandments of men, things that God did not command, but people came up with. This was Jesus' primary criticism of the Pharisees, I think, because that was the distinctive of the Pharisee denomination.

The Jewish religion had many denominations in the days of Jesus. There were the Essenes who lived out in the wilderness. There were the Sadducees with their special set of doctrines.

There were the Pharisees with theirs. There were others. But the Pharisees and the Sadducees were the most predominant in Israel at this time in the country.

It's like Baptists and Presbyterians or something like it's different denominations within the Jewish religion because they had their own distinctive beliefs. The Pharisees distinctive belief was that the traditions of the rabbis carried as much weight as the law of Moses. They felt that their piety required them to uphold the law of Moses and the traditions of the elders.

In fact, modern Orthodox Jews still have this same opinion. They believe that the traditions of the elders, what they call the oral Torah, is really part of the true law. You see, actually, Roman Catholics and Orthodox Jews have this in common.

They believe that there's the written word of God to the Jews. That's the written Torah, the law that was given and recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. And, of course, to the Roman Catholics, the written Torah is the Bible itself, but then they have their traditions that are equal to it.

To the Roman Catholics, these traditions are the decisions made by the ecumenical councils in the centuries after Jesus was gone. And they consider that the traditions of the of the councils are equal to scripture in weight. The Orthodox Jews believe that the oral Torah is equal to the written Torah in weight.

And they said, the rabbis said that God gave Moses the written Torah and God gave Moses the oral Torah. And Moses handed down the oral Torah to Joshua and Joshua handed it down to others after him. And eventually it was handed down to the rabbis.

So that they claimed that their traditions, which had been originated by the rabbis, were actually originated with Moses. There was no record that it was, but that's in the nature of their claim. It was not written.

It's not the written Torah. Allegedly, Moses spoke these things in addition to what he wrote. Now, one has to ask, you know, why would Moses commit so many things to just oral teaching when he was not afraid to write down thousands and thousands of words of written things? If he's if he thinks it's so important, why does he write down so much Torah and leave so much unwritten? And of course, there's no evidence in the Bible at all that there was an oral Torah that Moses passed down.

But the rabbis thought there was. And the rabbis traditions, the traditions, the elders were that oral Torah. Today, that oral Torah has been written down in in the various portions of what's called the Talmud.

Modern Orthodox Judaism is Talmudism. They believe that the Talmud contains authoritative instructions to the Jewish people and their religion is based on Talmudic teaching, which was not written in the time of Jesus, but was written later in the third

century after Christ. And the Talmud, the Mishnah, the Gemara, the various parts of the Talmud, they were written down a couple of centuries after Christ.

But the contents of them are believed to have been orally taught by the rabbis for centuries earlier than the time of their written down that the Jews kept these things orally. Now, this is I mean, this is apparently true. What the rabbis taught in the days before Jesus were apparently faithfully remembered by their disciples and passed down until centuries later.

They're written down, probably essentially as they had been uttered by their rabbis centuries earlier, because the disciples of a rabbi would remember and memorize the rabbis teaching and pass it along. And this is one reason that we can be fairly sure that the teachings of Jesus have been recorded for us properly, although they were written down maybe 50 years, if that, after Jesus spoke them 50 years or less. Some of them may have been written down 20 years after Jesus spoke them, but between 20 and 50, the four gospels would probably have all been written and.

And that the disciples of Rabbi Jesus would not remember his teachings for that long seems very crazy to suggest. I mean, just because you and I don't remember a sermon when we leave the church five minutes later, we don't remember what the preacher preached about. That doesn't mean that the rabbis didn't have more astute and.

Diligent disciples in that Jesus disciples were probably as diligent in memorizing his teaching as any rabbi students would be. And the Jews assume that the Talmud correctly has preserved the actual verbal teachings of rabbis like Maliel and Hillel and other ancient rabbis. And those were what the Pharisees, as a denomination, were distinguished by their belief in this oral Torah being authoritative, this belief that these traditions, the elders carried weight.

Now, Jesus disagreed with them on this, obviously. And tells them that they are teaching for doctrines, human commandments. It's clear Jesus did not believe that the oral Torah came from Moses or from God.

It came from human beings, their human teaching, and he goes on after he's quoted Isaiah, he says, for laying aside the commandment of God. You hold the tradition of men, the washing of pictures and cups and many other such things. You do.

And he said to them, all too well, you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your tradition. And he gives an example for Moses said, honor your father and your mother and he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death. But you say, and this is quoting from one of the rabbis, if a man says to his father or mother, whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban that is dedicated to the temple.

And you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of

God of no effect through your tradition, which you have handed down and many such things you do. There's quite a few places in this narrative that referred to the fact that these particular customs are not unique. They do many other such things.

Back in verse four, Mark said in the middle of verse four, he said, and there are many other things which they have received in home, like the washing of cups. And then Jesus says them in verse eight, the washing of pictures and cups and many other such things. And now, again, in verse 13, he points out one example of how they put their traditions above the word of God.

And after he says that, and you do many other such things as that. In other words, I'm not going to catalog catalog the whole list of things that I think you're doing wrong. I'll give you one example.

You do a whole bunch of other things of the same sort. Now, what was it he says they do? There is the words, the commands that God gives, and then there's the words of the rabbis. These are the commandments of men, not of God.

And he says, God said, for example, he said Moses said, but clearly he's referring to what Moses said as the commands of God. You see, because he says in verse nine, you reject the commandment of God to keep your tradition. And it's an example he's giving in verse 10.

Moses said that means that's the commandment of God. Moses was the prophet of God. What Moses said, God said, Moses said, or God commanded to honor your father and your mother.

And also, he said, he who curses father and mother, let me put death. Now, that's the law that's from God, that's from Moses, that's authoritative. And therefore, there's a standing duty for all offspring to honor their parents.

Now, of course, the Bible didn't in the law outline all the ways that one should honor their parents. Paul, for example, applied it in Ephesians six, the opening verses. He says, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is good.

Then he quotes, honor your father and your mother. So when it comes to honoring father and mother, children at least should obey their parents. That's part of honoring father and mother is obeying.

In another place, Paul said in first Timothy five, that people who have aged parents, widowed mothers and so forth and grandmothers, that those people should support them financially, should support their ancient parents and their aged parents and it says and repay them. It says that. In first Timothy five, verse three and following honor widows who are really widows, that means the church should support real widows who don't have enough to support them.

But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents for this is good and acceptable for God. That is, the children and grandchildren of the widow should support them. The church should support them because the children have to repay.

They have a debt owed. They should honor their mother and their and their mother's mother. So this is understood.

Parents have, in a sense, by bringing you into the world, by making tremendous sacrifices in their early life when you are helpless. They definitely, you definitely cramped their style when you were a baby in diapers and making a mess every time you ate and everything you did. You had to be carried because you couldn't walk.

I mean, you definitely cramped your parents style, but they made those sacrifices for you. Now you owe them something. And Paul says, when they're old, you repay them by you taking care of them.

Now, Jesus affirms this, that this this need to honor parents is still an obvious debt that we all owe. But he says, you have a tradition that kind of nullifies that. You say, if a man says to his father and mother, whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban.

Now, Corban means a gift or specifically something that a person dedicates to God or to the temple. Samuel was Corban. He was dedicated to God as a child.

And when something's been dedicated to God, it can't be used for other purposes. When Samuel is dedicated to the temple, he couldn't just go out and make a living some other way. He had to work all his life for God.

People might dedicate some of their animals to God or some possession, some money or something to God. Whatever they dedicated to God now belongs to God and was not ordinary. It couldn't be used for ordinary purposes.

Helping your parents with it, for example, would be an ordinary purpose. If you had parents who had a financial need and you had finances that you could help, but you don't like your parents, you and they are not on good terms. You don't want to help them out.

So you use as an excuse the fact that you dedicate these things to God. Then, of course, if you dedicate them to God, then you can't use them to help your parents. And Jesus says that's what the rabbis had come up with so that people would not be obligated to help their parents in certain situations that they didn't want to.

They could just say it is Corbin. It's a gift to God. This thing that I would have given to you and would have benefited you.

I can't do that because it's something I've dedicated. That's what Jesus said. They do.

He says, and you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, making the word of God, which had told him to honor his parents, of none effect. And you do a lot of things like that, he says. And when he had called all the multitude to him, he said to them, hear me, everyone, and understand there's nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him, but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man.

If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear. So it's in this connection of eating unwashed, eating food with unwashed hands. Does that defile the food? Do you become a defiled person ceremonially because you ate without washing your hands? He said, listen, it's not what you put in your mouth that's going to defile you.

It's what comes out of you. Now, he's going to explain that further, but we're going to take a break here just because it's time to do that. And I want to take adequate time for his further explanation.

So we're going to break this right here and come back to this same narrative in just a few minutes.