

True Worshipers Must Avoid Vain Worship  
(Mark 7:1-13)

Introduction:

1. In John 4:23 Jesus said that God seeks "true worshippers" to worship Him.
2. We are studying a series of lessons that are designed to help us be "true worshippers."
3. Contrary to popular opinion, God does not accept all worship.
4. In Mark 7:1-13 we read about some people whose worship was "vain."
5. We need to be familiar with the mistake made by the scribes and Pharisees so we can avoid it -- "true worshippers must avoid vain worship."

Discussion:

- I. (vs.1-5) CERTAIN MEN FOUND FAULT WITH THE LORD'S DISCIPLES
  - A. (vs.1) These men came to Jesus from Jerusalem [Jesus was in Galilee].
    1. These men were:
      - a. Pharisees: members of the strictest sect of the Jews
      - b. scribes: copiers and teachers of the law.
    2. The scribes and Pharisees often criticized Jesus (ex. Mark 2:15-16).
    3. This was probably their purpose for coming to Jesus.
  - B. (vs.2) On this occasion they found fault with the Lord's disciples.
    1. They saw the disciples eat with "*defiled*" [unwashed] hands.
    2. This does not mean that the disciples had not washed at all.
    3. (vs.3-4) Mark explained what took place.
      - a. These Jews followed a set of oral traditions passed down for many years.
      - b. One tradition said that the Jews could not eat a meal until they went through a ceremony of washing themselves.
      - c. They also believed that their cooking vessels and tables had to be purified.
      - d. (Leviticus 12-15) The Law of Moses taught the Jews to practice sanitation.
      - e. However, the practice that they advocated was a manmade tradition.
    4. (vs.5) They asked Jesus why His disciples did not follow their tradition.
- II. (vs.6-8) JESUS ANSWERED THE PHARISEES AND SCRIBES
  - A. (vs.6) He applied the statement in Isaiah 29:13 to these men.
  - B. (vs.7-8) He also said that their worship was "*vain*" and why it was vain [they taught "*the commandments of men*" as their doctrines].
- III. (vs.9-13) JESUS POINTED OUT THE HYPOCRISY OF THESE MEN
  - A. (vs.9) They actually considered their traditions to be more important than God's written commandments.
  - B. (vs.10-12) Jesus illustrated their error.
    1. (vs.10) Jesus quoted 2 commandments given in Exodus 20:12; 21:17.
    2. (vs.11-12) These men had developed a tradition which allowed them in their minds to be free from obeying these 2 commandments.
    3. (vs.13) Unfortunately, this was just one example of many similar practices.

Conclusion:

1. The Pharisees and scribes were guilty of "binding" [binding commands that God has not given] and "loosing" [loosing commands that God has given].
2. In Matthew 18:18 Jesus gave the apostles authority to bind and loose, but we do not have that authority.
3. We especially need to avoid "binding and loosing" as we search the Scriptures to know how to worship through singing and eating the Lord's Supper.
4. In seeking to worship God "*in spirit and in truth*" we must not substitute God's commands with manmade commands.
5. May God help us to avoid the mistake of the Pharisees and scribes so our worship will be pleasing to Him!