

Thirteenth Week After Pentecost 2021

Mark 7

Mark 7:1–13 When the Pharisees gathered to [Jesus], with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, 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.) *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?” 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; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”*

And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ But you say, ‘If a man tells his father or his mother, Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban’ (that is, given to God)— then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

In the Name of Jesus.

This hand-washing and Corban business have EVERYTHING to do with you, dear student of Jesus; even the quoting of Isaiah and the nice information Saint Mark

provides about the couch-washing and dishwashing protocols of lawyers and professors two thousand years ago on the other side of the world.

Really.

The first verse of the Gospel according to Saint Mark gets us on the right track:

1 The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. ¹

“WHY do YOUR...DISCIPLES...not act LIKE US?!”

Praise God. He has sent us Good News that is utterly new—new wine in new wineskins, not the same old, same old. Because that News, that Revelation, that Herald’s Cry is NOT...ABOUT...US! It is about Him: Jesus the King.

That’s the first verse of Mark. His last word brings us back where we started:

⁵ And entering the tomb, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, dressed in a white robe, and they were alarmed. ⁶ And he said to them, “Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has risen; he is not here. See the place where they laid him. ⁷ But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going before you to Galilee. There you will see him, just as he told you.” ⁸ And they went out and fled from the tomb, for trembling and astonishment had seized them, and they said nothing to

¹ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mk 1:1). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

anyone, for they were afraid.²

The Good News, God's lesson plan until the End, is about Him, God's Son; not at all about us. Not about the disciples: tell them the New Goodness of God that was too new for them to remember when Jesus told them, at least three times we know of. Peter cut himself off from the disciples. But the Resurrection of the Crucified King is not about Peter; so tell Peter too.

And the women told nothing to nobody, trembling and bewildered. So it's not about them either: The God we all know is there, but can only approach wrong; Who took His deepest breath, like He had one shot at it; and blurted out...His Son.

And His Son—the Man Jesus, the Son of Mary—ran in front of all men and their idols and daily fretting; and He told them, told us: 'You worry about what the government is going to do to help you or to harm you. Alongside that, worry about MY government! But I tell you, that you have nothing to worry about at all from Me. Nothing evil that comes to you is a final sentence. And you need never worry that any good that has come to you will be taken away because you slip up in the future. Because in MY government, people are rewarded whether or not they think they are good; whether or not they judge that they are unworthy.

Our dear brother Joe fell asleep in Christ a few days ago. And I had to stand up on my hind legs and say something. I was worried going in and dissatisfied coming out. Because Isaiah was right when he prophesied about us religious bigots. We find some sort of sick satisfaction in the traditions of men, man's associations; and we have no idea what's what with Real God.

² [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mk 16:5–8). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

Despite having skimmed the Bible at some point in my life, your poor pastor still has so much OLD and so little NEW. I was worried about finding the right words to lead poor Joe's detractors from their pretense about God, the Law, their final judgments about themselves and others. Poor brother Joe was burdened by religious folk who knew all about the traditions of men and nothing at all about Moses. Moses has no friends, no buddies, no favorites. Moses came to kill and slay and condemn and crush. And Moses is, at the least, infuriated by men who think His Law was given to bring heaven on earth.

Happy for the Church, I think, upon reviewing my little book report, that I did Mark 1 to Mark 16 also: Christ, Christ, Christ. Which is all the Gospel is looking for. 'Proclaim this unbelievable Revelation to all the world, to all creatures!'

Birds of a feather flock together.

That goes for Pharisees and scribes 2000 years ago. That goes for all church-y folk of all time. What binds people is culture, not the Good News: as the WORLD sees 'binding.' What Christ sees as binding is this: 'He who believes and is baptized shall be saved.'

There's even silly, endless, wearisome chattering about hand-washing protocols in OUR day! And vaccine people versus anti-vaxers. And just about EVERYONE your poor pastor runs across is loaded for bear, ready to unload on the world his opinion.

Above those Babel sounds, the blessed angels sing. There is a rule, a church, a government, a worry that lives

and thrives even in the very midst of this sad world. And it is found here:

²² And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, “Take; this is my body.” ²³ And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. ²⁴ And he said to them, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. ²⁵ Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.” ³

When brother Joe kept on being bothered by former church-y acquaintances, the Holy Spirit finally led me to help Joe a bit. Being a legalist, I told him to avoid those people. There’s nothing in the Word that makes me a seating-chart arranger. But the Gospel I told Joe was that he should only start worrying about his standing with God, worry about his sins, if and when someone with whom he communes has to have a talk. That seemed to bring him back to life from the death of the legalists.

My dear ones: with you, your poor pastor would like to see more folk hearing the Good News and communing with us. Okey-dokey! Put that in your prayers, with me! Tell the people in your orbit that they are welcome to commune with us too. But remember what Jesus’ rule is about: Him; no you, or me, or anyone in the world.

He pours out so much Good News on us in this little flock, not because WE are anything any other man is not.

And He is not going to change His attachment to us; He is not going to remove His Holy Spirit from His eternal dwelling in us; His Father is not going to abandon us. Not

³ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Mk 14:22–25). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

because of how many of us there are or how few, how good or how bad, how this or that.

Because the kingdom of God is worried about only one thing: and it ain't YOU, or ME. The kingdom of God is only WORRIED—not worried at all, really—that the Ruler Who has NO power is now in charge of us all.

Remember Joe, my dear ones. In the Name of Jesus.