

Good morning, everyone. Take your Bibles with me and turn to Mark chapter 7, if you will, please. Mark chapter 7. We're going to move ahead to a new chapter today. a very important text this week and next week. It's a two-part mini-series. The first one entitled, The Heart of the Matter. This is, of course, part one. Next week will be The Heart of the Matter, part two. But we're going to be in Mark chapter 7, verses 1 through 13 this morning. And so once you've found that text, if you would, rise with me in honor of the one who gave us this word as we read the text. this morning. Mark chapter 7, verses 1 through 13. It reads, And the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around him when they had come from Jerusalem, and had seen that some of his disciples were eating their bread with defiled hands, that is, unwashed. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash themselves, and there are many other things which they had received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? And he said to them, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites. As it is written, these people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commands of men. Leaving the commandments of God, you hold to the tradition of men. And he was also saying to them, you are good at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, honor your father and your mother, and he who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death. But you say, if a man says to his father or his mother, whatever you might benefit for me as Corbin, that is to say given to God, you no longer leave him to do anything for his father or his mother, thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition, which you have handed down, and you do many things such as that. This is the word of the Lord, let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we're so thankful for the grace that has come upon our lives, that has drawn us and brought us together here to worship this morning. We pray for those who aren't able to make it to our body as it seems there's another wave of sickness impacting us, Lord, and we do pray for relief from that, if it be your will. And we pray that if it sustains in the sickness, that we will learn to trust you more and rely on your comforting hand as we unite to serve those who are ill. We pray, Lord, for this text this morning, that it would impact our lives, that your spirit would work within us to apply the passage that we have before us, that

we will, by your grace, not lift the idols of men's commandments above your perfect law. I pray, Lord, that you will help us today, help me specifically, remove any hindrances from me, any nerves, any stumbling speech, that you'd be glorified by your word, and that I would simply be a vessel which you use today. We ask that you would help us to do all of this for your glory, both today and in the coming weeks. In your holy name I pray, amen. All right, you can be seated. So from last week, we know that as we ended up last week, wrapping up chapter six, we talked about Jesus doing ministry in Gennesaret. He was going around, it's just south of Capernaum, between Capernaum and another city there just south, and there's this three-mile stretch that they call Gennesaret. And as we left off last week, he was doing ministry, he was going in the marketplaces, they were touching his tassels, he was healing people just by the touching of his garment. And now we're jumping ahead in true Markian fashion. He's jumping into chapter 7 without giving us a whole lot of context. He basically just says, and the Pharisees and some scribes gathered around him. The common thought here is that he's still likely in Capernaum and Gennesaret area in the Galilee region, mostly because after this altercation that we're going to see over this week and next, he moves on and no longer ministers in Galilee for the remainder of Mark for the most part. He focuses on Gentiles and then eventually moving into Jerusalem and Judea towards the end of the book. So it's likely that he's very much still in Gennesaret. There's no way to know 100% for sure. There's debate on that, but likely he's still ministering in Gennesaret, still in Capernaum in the region of Galilee, ministering to the people. And these Pharisees here have traveled up to see him. It's a 90 mile journey. from Jerusalem to where Christ likely is. And in this, these two passages, there's an overall motif of cleanness versus uncleanness. There's this idea of what makes a man unclean? What makes a man clean? Where does the aspects of determining defilement versus righteousness come from? And this is extremely important to a Jew. And the reason why this is so extremely important to the Jewish people is because they equated Cleanness versus uncleanness as the ability to worship. So if you were set as being or determined to be defiled or unclean, you weren't allowed to come into the temple. You weren't allowed to approach the synagogues. You weren't able to come in and worship God because in the Old Testament, God revealed himself and settled in the tabernacle. So you came to God. And we know in the old covenant, you came to God in a very specific way with specific ritualistic cleansings that we'll look at a little bit more later. But as the people wanted to approach God, they had to come to the temple at the time of Jesus. And we know

with the new covenant, Christ has condescended to us, right? We talked about that a lot last week with everything that happened in the water and Christ condescending into the boat. So we know the new covenant, he comes to us, but to a Jew, this wasn't the case. They thought they had to go to God as instructed to approach the temple. Another thing that I want to clarify as a part of introduction is a couple terms I'm going to use today, the Mishnah and the Torah. So those are two distinctive books of the Jewish teaching. The Torah, of course, is the laws, the Old Testament, the prophets, specifically Moses, Moses' five books. But the Torah is what God gave his people, so we would consider it the Old Testament is a good way of thinking of it. The Mishnah, however, Are the recordings of the elders or teachers or translators, interpreters of the law? How is the Torah applied? So we're going to talk about both of those terms because Jesus distinctly brings about the traditions, the oral traditions, the traditions of the elders, which would be the Mishnah, versus the actual law of Yahweh. He's going to have a distinguishing teaching about that. So keep those terms straight in your mind, the Mishnah, the oral tradition of the Jews versus the Torah. Now, as we think through the beginning of this text, this text, and I'm excited to share it because Jesus quotes Isaiah and it's going to expand for us as we'll see. But there's something here that Jesus is going to display over these two weeks. As Mark has continued going through his gospel, he has unequivocally proven the authority of Christ over and over. And over again, hasn't he? He showed us in miracles. He's shown us in the actions of Jesus and his teachings. And now Mark is going to show us that Jesus also has authority to interpret the law. He's going to show us that the true intention of the law is what he says it is, because he has the authority as one who gave the law all those years ago. And so we're going to be able to see another aspect of the authority of Christ today as well. So let's dig in here because there's a lot packed in. Point number one for today's sermon is accusation levied. So if you have your notes, the sermon notes, the first blank is levied, accusation levied. And this is gonna be verses one through five. So I'm gonna reread that for us today. And we're gonna see the Pharisees attacking Jesus, levying an accusation against him. starting in verse one, and the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around him when they had come from Jerusalem and had seen that some of his disciples were eating their bread with defiled hands, that is, unwashed. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders. And when they had come from the

marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash themselves. And there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots. And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? So here's the picture. We've seen Jesus establish His authority. We've seen Him ministering to Gennesaret, going through the marketplaces, being touched by those who were sick. And that's going to be important here in just a moment. And we've seen here the leaders coming 90 miles to have their second altercation. If you recall Mark 3 in verse 22, the Pharisees have already come, the religious leaders have already come to question Jesus and His ministry. If you remember back in Mark 3, the Pharisees specifically claimed that the works of Jesus were from Satan. So they applied to him the things that God were doing, the moving of the spirit, the healing of people that was going on. And they said in verse 22 of chapter three, and the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, he is possessed by Beelzebul and he casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons. So they came out swinging the first time. So this has been quite a while since chapter three, right? Both in our time and then of course, then as well. But if you recall the Pharisee's first interaction with him that we have recorded in Mark, they called him Satan. So now they've traveled 90 miles again because his ministry has grown. If you guys remember when he landed in Gennesaret, everyone was like, oh, we know who this is. And they start bringing everyone to him. So his popularity has grown and here they come some 90 miles, which was not an easy feat in those days. Anybody in here want to walk 90 miles? Not me. So they put a lot of effort in here to coming to Jesus. And the wording here, when it says they gathered around him in the original language, this is a hostile voice. This is a hostile intent. They came with hostility. They came with a purpose. They were coming to accuse him. And when they get here, They come and they say, why are your disciples eating with unwashed hands? And that's what they say in verse five. That's the ultimate accusation. But what Mark does here for us is pause for two verses and he gives a description of why the Pharisees would ask this. Now, if you guys recall, when we've been talking through Mark, who is Mark writing to? You can answer. You guys remember? The Gentiles, the Romans, right? So he's writing in a way, this is another clear depiction of why we know that Mark is writing his gospel specifically to the Gentiles, is because he throws in these little tidbits about the Jewish culture, because the Gentiles, the Romans, especially in Rome itself, likely did not have a lot of interaction with Jews, so they wouldn't have understand

why he's eating with unwashed hands that big of a deal. Now, I want to make sure and clarify this, we'll talk about it more later, unwashed hands has nothing to do with hygiene. Okay, so if you're like, oh, I wash my hands every time I eat, that's good, that's hygienic. But that's not what this is about. This is not about hygiene. So as they've come to him, we see a good description here from Mark, that it was the Jews who did not eat unless they carefully washed their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash themselves. And the word there is baptizo. They actually dunked themselves underwater, completely submerging themselves when they came back from the marketplace. And then he goes on to describe that they have specific regulations on how they wash cups and pitchers and copper pots. So I want us to understand where the Pharisees are coming from because there's a lot packed into this information that Mark is telling us. So the Pharisees considered any, considered uncleanness to be much broader than what the law of God actually considered to be unclean. So we have to understand what they're adding on, the Mishnah, the verbal, let's say application of the law that man has added on to the law of God, had much more with it than what God had ever intended. The washing of hands here, is some of your versions may say a cupping of the hand or a washing with the fist, those kinds of things. So the physicality of it was simply to pick up a cup of water and to wash your hands and to let it fall. Now, when we think of uncleanness in our culture, we think of disease, garbage, trash, uncleanness. What the Pharisees were talking about was simply extended to, they would add on to the law of God to include Gentiles. Gentiles were simply unclean because of who they were. What about Samaritans? Samaritans, I mean, they're not Jewish, they can't be clean. They added on women after childbirth. They would actually add on for weeks or months that women were unclean after childbirth. creeping things, just bugs in general, they were unclean. And the list goes on, 25% of the Mishnah, the verbal oral tradition added on to the law of God was about purity rituals. Literally, you can do this if you touch this, if you don't do this, if you walk past this, but you don't get so within so many feet, if you don't sit on this, you could spend hours talking about the uncleanness that the Pharisees determined to be unclean. It has nothing to do with hygiene. In fact, there's really not a lot of rationality to a lot of their determination of uncleanness. Let me give you this one. This one blew my mind, because I think this just encapsulates exactly what the Pharisees were adding on. The Aramaic sections of Daniel and Ezra, so this is the Torah, the Aramaic sections of Daniel and Ezra were unclean and could not be touched. So as they were reading the scroll, they would not touch the physical paper of the Aramaic versions

of Daniel and Ezra. And if any translation of the scriptures were put into Aramaic, it was considered unclean to touch. And you were then considered unclean and could not worship. So that encapsulates the rationality of the Pharisees. Now, I want to pause here, because this will come back for application later. The heart of the people at that time, maybe not in Jesus's time, but when these regulations began, their goal was to fence around the law of God so that they could be holy as God had told them to be holy. So their intent was, I want to be holy because God has told me, told us to be holy. So at the beginning, does that sound like a pretty good thing? Right? Out of the mindset of them, let's be holy by fencing. That's the word the Jews use. They fence around the law of God. So every one of these builds another layer of protection so that you don't break the law of God. And there's gonna be a problem with that. We're gonna see why there's a problem with that later. But to put it in context for how we might be able to understand, especially when it comes to people and the marketplaces and things like that, in our culture there's a social stigma of someone who is thought to be immoral. Right? You guys remember small-town USA back in the 50s and 60s? If someone was considered to be very immoral, you crossed the side of the street and walked across the other side of the street, right? You didn't talk to them, told the kids, don't, you know, don't, you guys stay here, hold my hand, right? You guys know what I'm talking about. Or there's the social stigma of, if you come from a bad family or a bad town, oh, we can't, we can't go near them, we might catch something, right? There's this idea of, even in our culture, that we see things as not approachable. Even in some cases, sadly, someone who's no longer a part of our church becomes suddenly socially unclean. I've seen that happen. So as we think through the uncleanness that the Pharisees are talking about, we have to wrap our mind around the irrational idea of what they're adding on to scripture. Now as Mark has been writing to the Romans here. He's now given them a brief description. I hope I've helped you expand that so we can grasp our minds around just how far they were taking their additional laws to. And to understand as well, The reason the Mishnah was so put forth is that the teachings at one point between the time that the Law of Moses was laid down, they don't know exactly what year it was written, but it has actually been written that Moses received both of the Torah and the Mishnah on Mount Sinai, and that it holds the same weight as the Law of Yahweh that was given to Moses. So the oral tradition, the Mishnah, holds the same weight as the Law of God itself. So please see where I'm setting this up. Follow my train of thought because

it's gonna become very important when Jesus tears down the law of man that was added to the law of God here in just a few moments. So as we get to the end of the first five verses, the Pharisees and scribes have come, they've seen what they're doing, and they ask Jesus, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? Of course, the rabbi being the one responsible for making sure his disciples were following this oral tradition. So here we've come, we've set the scene, we know what's coming, we know where it's coming from, we know the accusation that's been levied. Now, I want to take just a moment and apply a couple of things from these first few verses that we've already talked about. So when we expand on all the extra things, all the things that the Pharisees were doing, we can understand now why Jesus will call them hypocrites in just a moment. Because they are not holding to the law of God, they are holding to the law of men. They have elevated something that man has added to the law of God and elevated above the law of God. Now, how many times do we do this in our own lives? How many times have we done this? How many denominations do we know that do this? How many teachers do we know that do this? How many pastors have you sat under that do this? How many times have you done this in your own life, where you sit in church week in and week out, and you look at everyone around you and go, oh, I didn't watch a movie that I shouldn't have watched. They shouldn't have, well, I heard them talking about that movie. It's a good thing I'm holier than they are. So please understand, I'm not talking anything wrong with standards, and we're gonna talk about that in just a minute. I'm not swinging the pendulum too far, but I want you to understand, get this really wrapped around your mind, hope it sticks. The law of God does not need a fence. It doesn't. The law of God is perfect, exactly as he gave it. It is to be followed exactly as he gave it. The law of God does not need a fence. especially in the new covenant. Because in the new covenant, we no longer have the law written on tablets of stone. He has written it upon our hearts. We have the spirit within us that tells us what is right and wrong, that leads us according to the scriptures. We have a new heart that no longer is bound to sin. And so we understand and know as new covenant believers that the law of God does not need offense. And in this application, I want to reference Romans 14, 14. The whole chapter is a fantastic chapter on understanding the New Testament view of how the law should be applied. But it says in verse 14 of that chapter, I know and am convinced in the Lord Jesus that nothing is defiled in itself, but to him who considers anything to be defiled, to him it is defiled. And in that it encapsulates this idea that when it's not expressly written the law of God, it is left to the conscience of the individual. and that you have no right as a believer to add on to the law

of God and put those stipulations of your conscience onto someone else. When the law of God is perfect as it is, do not add a fence for someone else to have to climb through to find it. And we do this a lot, and this is why I'm hammering home on this. I was raised in a denomination that that was the goal of the denomination, to see how many offenses they could add on, both from haircut, to clothing, to where you went, to what kind of car you drove, to what kind of school you went to, and all these extra man-made regulations were added on. And if you didn't live up to the pastor's view of how you should act, regardless of whether it was in scripture, but if you did not add, live in a way that the pastor approved of, you were considered unconverted in most circumstances. And what Jesus is gonna teach us here is he's gonna tear down those fences, elevating the law of God as he was given, as it was intended to be understood, as he interprets it correctly and perfectly as the one who has the authority to do that. Number two, accusation reversed. Accusation reversed, verses six through eight. In normal fashion, as Jesus so often does in his altercations with people, as you'll see in all four gospels, he just asked them the question back or points the accusation right back at them. In verses six through eight, he reads, and he 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 commands of men. Leaving the commandment of God, you hold to the traditions of men." So here we're going to elaborate on the quote that Jesus gives. Before we do that, I want to give you a definition here for hypocrite. As many of us probably know what it means, but sometimes it can be twisted and used differently in our culture. The word hypocrite, especially in the Greek of that time, was the word that they used for an actor. Someone who, with no conviction, played something that they were not. It was what they called an actor on stage. So a hypocrite would be what, in the Greek theater of those times, people would come out and literally they would have different masks and they would play different characters across the stage. So they would have a mask and they would come out and they would act like this person in the particular play and then they would put the mask down and they'd act like this person in the particular play. And there was no substance to them. There was no conviction. It was them pretending to be something that they were not. And so when we think through the idea of calling them hypocrites, it absolutely describes precisely what they're doing. And we're gonna see that before



the end of verse 13. But I want us to have that definition locked in here as Jesus says it. So when we look at Isaiah, he is quoting from Isaiah chapter 29 and verse 13. So you can make that note if you'd like. He's quoting from Isaiah 29 and 13. But the chapters that he's quoting from, Isaiah 29, is right in the middle of what's called the Woe Oracles. So from Isaiah 28 through 31, so chapters 28 through 31, Isaiah writes the Woe Oracles, or the pronouncements of judgment upon Israel. And this is an extension of Isaiah chapter 6, whenever God says that they will not have lips to hear, and I will not give them ears to hear, excuse me, and lips to understand, or eyes to see, and He extends this judgment that Israel has, here's the judgment coming to pass in chapters 28 through 31. And in chapter 28, I wanna give a high level overview. Chapter 28 begins with a specific attack on the rulers of Israel, and then gets more specific later on in that chapter, with very specific condemnations on the leaders of Jerusalem themselves because they have rejected the prophet's message. So at this point in Isaiah, the message of God has come forth and the leaders of Jerusalem are being accused by Yahweh himself of ignoring the prophet's message. And then in chapter 29, we find the verse that we have in 13. And then in verse, excuse me, in chapter 30, the religious leaders are, Isaiah goes on to describe the religious leaders as men that think they are wise, but are actually like obstinate children. Isaiah calls them obstinate children who think they know better with their schemes and strategies than the clear instruction of Yahweh. That's some heavy language for the God of the universe to be calling you. obstinate children who rely on their own schemes rather than the law of God. And so they are in effect rejecting his very directives. And as it continues in those oracles, it says that Judah is blind and deaf, that their leaders are blind and deaf, and the policies they implement will lead to the land's devastation and the nation's exile. I know it sounds like I'm talking about a lot of history here, but it's important to understand what happens in AD 70. Okay, so bear with me here. And even in the wording that we have in verses nine through 14 is about the leaders. So in chapter 29, verses nine through 14 is about the leaders. Although the quote that Jesus has in verse 13 says the people, the people was in reference to the leaders when you look in context of the whole section. And what's so interesting So interesting, is that the prophets were coming to correct the very thing that the Pharisees are still doing. Isaiah came with the message to correct them from putting aside the law of God for their own ideas of what morality looks like, for their own ideas of what holiness looks like. Isaiah came to warn them of this, and yet the Pharisees in the time

of Jesus, thousands of years later, were doing the same thing, almost worse, with what they have added on. Because in the law of God, there's only three times, you know there's only three times in all the law of God, that it says to wash three times. So when you think of the law of God, you're like, okay, yeah, there's probably lots of places for you to wash.

I mean, holiness is next, cleanliness is next to godliness, which is not in the Bible, by the way. Cleanliness is next to godliness. We have to be clean, let's make sure we wash. There's only three places. The priests were to wash before offering a sacrifice in Exodus 30 and 40. An Israelite, after having a discharge in Leviticus 15. and the elders for the special sacrifice of the heifer, Deuteronomy 21. Those are the only three times that the Israelites were commanded as a whole to wash in the way the Pharisees are requiring for all those other things. Just those three times. So God's accusation against the nation of Israel and Isaiah, and Christ's accusation against the Pharisees in chapter seven of Mark are exactly the same. You have laid aside the law of God as imperfect. You have said, this is not good enough. God doesn't know best. Let me add on some extra for you to help you. Can you see the problem with how that works? Can you see the problem? And so when we think through what Isaiah is telling the people of Israel in his oracles of woe and Jesus quoting right from the middle of that to then apply those same oracles to the nation of Israel and present with its leaders in Jerusalem. Remember, the leaders are from Jerusalem. He is now telling them and setting them up for what is to come later on in Mark and eventually happen in AD 70. This is an eschatological or end times or the end of things revelation. Jesus is quoting very specifically from the Old Testament because later on in Mark in chapter 12, he is going to give the vineyard to someone else. You guys remember the parable? He's gonna give the vineyard to someone else. He gave it to the Israelites, right? And so the application will get there eventually in however many weeks it takes us to get to chapter 12. We'll get there, but that particular parable is he gave his vineyard to a group of vine growers who killed all of his servants, ultimately killed his son, and he had to come in and destroy the vine growers and give the vineyard to someone else, referencing Israel losing the covenant of God because they broke it and giving the vineyard or the new covenant to the Gentiles. And then we have in chapter 13, Jesus goes on in Mark, and we'll get there eventually, to talk about the destruction of the temple and how the temple is going to be destroyed. And so in this altercation, only the second altercation in Mark with the Pharisees, Jesus is laying down the consequences for them rejecting the law of God and living how they determined to live and teaching others to do it also. Because then in AD 70, the Romans

come in and completely wipe out the temple and essentially bring about the end of pharisaical Judaism. The religion of Judaism as a whole, yes, there's still something that practice remnants of it today, but as a large religion that was practiced for hundreds of years, effectively came to an end with the destruction of the temple, because true Judaism cannot be practiced without a temple. So Jesus is pronouncing judgment upon them for doing what? for elevating the commandments of man to the level of the law of God, for laying aside the law of God and creating idols that they hold up and say, this is actually how you worship God. How many times, how many altercations do we see in the gospels that Jesus calls the Pharisees out for this exact behavior? All of Matthew chapter 23 is Jesus calling the Pharisees out for this exact behavior. He calls them washed cups on the outside, but dirty on the inside. Because they follow these commandments of man that they have elevated to the level of God's law without their hearts being, there's the heart of the matter without their hearts being focused on God. And then he calls them whitewashed tombs, but they're full of dead men's bones. They're full of rot inside because they think the outward that they have added to the law of God is more important than the heart of the matter. Now, and that's why I'm so adamant about this. Do not add the law of God and equate it to what he says. I'm not saying that there can't be standards. It's according to your own conscience. I'm not saying that you can't give wise suggestions. Older believers say, hey, I've dealt with this before. If you have a pornography problem, you probably shouldn't have a smartphone. But to elevate that to the law of God is a sin. To elevate your own standards of movies that you watch as everyone else that watches those Our sinning is against the law of God. Yes, we are to be pure, but your conscience driven by the Holy Spirit through the word of God is what determines what that purity looks like in your life. Now, again, understand, I'm not saying you're in a free-for-all. Should we sin more that grace may abound? It's almost like God prepped us for that, right? Because in Romans, Paul says that exact same argument. We don't send as much as we can so that grace may abound, but what we cannot do is swing the pendulum too far the other way and apply standards that God does not give as his law. We cannot do it. And in Christendom, most of the time, especially in reformed theology, we swing the pendulum way over here to the law side. Be cautious. Because according to what Jesus told the Pharisees, them laying that aside and creating idols, called for their absolute destruction. Because they held their man-made standards over God's. And that's our application. It is absolute vanity to try to worship God with extra man-made burdens put onto the law. It's absolute vanity. You are hindering the

worship

of God's holy people by adding something to them that God has not placed on them himself. And that's why both Wes and I, as your elders, are committed to being very careful how we apply the text to specific things so that we don't inadvertently create a law in your mind and heart that God has not created. And so if you ever hear us say that's a conscience issue, understand that's what we are trying to do. If you ever hear us preach or teach and say, this is how I would handle that, but it's a conscience issue, that's between you and God. And remember what Paul says in

14, if you recognize it as defilement, it is defilement for you. So there may be things that are a sin for you that is not a sin for someone else. Do you follow that? And that's a hard thing for us to wrap our minds around, right? There may be things that God convicts you of that may not be a conviction for someone else, and that's okay. And our job as brothers and sisters in Christ is to not place stumbling blocks in front of them to cause them to fall and to hold up what they have, but it does not necessarily mean that you apply those same standards to your conscience. lest we fall into the trap of swinging the pendulum as the Pharisees did. And what does that come down to? What does that come down to?

The heart. That's where it comes down to.

Is your heart, which if you're a professed believer in Christ, is your heart impacted by the Holy Spirit and your desire is to glorify God? Believe me, he will work it out in his good time for that individual. It doesn't mean, he may even use you to do that. I'm not saying he won't, But you adding law doesn't help with that situation. And so I would challenge you, do you honor with your lips when your heart is far from him? Do you honor God with your lips when your heart is far from him? Do you come in ready to worship, to sing so that you can be a spectacle for someone else? I'm not saying

anyone here does that, I'm just asking some general questions. Do you do things around certain people or not do things around certain people so that you can look more holy or better than them? Be careful. That's a sign the pendulum is probably swinging too far. Do you consider yourself better than someone else because I would never buy that particular brand of whatever because they stand up for whatever cultural thing that we disagree with at the time? I've had those conversations. I've been accused of that myself because I have an Apple iPhone. and a MacBook computer because that just happens to be what I like to work on. And I've been accused of sinning because I have something from a company that supports whatever it was. I don't even remember the accusation now because it was that irrational.

But be careful. That's all. I won't beat a dead

horse, but just please understand, swinging the pendulum over here is just as bad as swinging the pendulum over here and living a terrible, sinful life so that grace may abound. It is equally bad, equally idolatrous, and equally condemned by God. And so that Jesus can make a better point, we're now gonna turn to point number three, accusation deepened. So he's already shown them their destruction is coming. He's told them by using Isaiah, this is what I want you to look at. God's law is perfect. It doesn't need a fence. And because you are adding to the commandments of God, leaving them aside, holding up your traditions as better, you're gonna be destroyed. And then he shows a prime example from their own writings of what this looks like. Verses nine through 13. It reads, and he also, excuse me, he was also saying to them, you are good at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. For Moses said, honor your father and your mother, and he who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death. But you say, if a man says to his father or his mother, whatever you might benefit from me as Corbin, that is to say given to God, You no longer leave him to do anything for his father or his mother, thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition, which you have handed down, and you do many things such as that. So as Jesus continues to move forward here in the conversation, he is now zeroing in on the heart of the matter. that worshiping God has now become an outward sign of chasing man-made laws for these people, instead of the purity of the heart of worshiping God in spirit and in truth, loving Him with all of you and loving your neighbor as yourself. Isn't that what Jesus said in Matthew 22, 36 through 40? that all the law and the prophets, everything that the law of God that he gave hinges on loving God with every part of you and loving people as yourself. So as we look at verse nine, we'll get into the parts from the quote of the Old Testament and Corbin, but As he was saying to them in verse nine, you are good at setting aside the commandment of God. In the original language, you there is emphatic. He is telling them it is their interpretation that is not in line with the law of Moses. Their attempt at fencing the Torah has done nothing but create idols. They have absolutely set aside the commandment of God. Now, let me ask you, for a Jew, the commandment of God, the Old Testament, the Torah, the books of Moses, was a sign of the what with the nation of Israel. Starts with a C, someone shouted out. It's in our church name. Covenant, there it is, I heard someone. The law of Moses was the sign of the covenant to the Jewish people. In fact, when Moses came down

off the Mount Sinai and he read the law to them, he asked them to accept that. And they said, we hear everything and we will obey. And then he sprinkled blood, a sign of a covenant across the people. They covenanted with God to uphold this law. And what Jesus is telling them, you have set aside the covenant that I have given you. You have set aside the covenant that I made with you to make you my people that you agreed to because you want to add your own regulations to it. And the example that he gives here is an honoring your father and mother, the number five of the Decalogue or the 10 commandments. All for their own tradition. It's mind boggling. In verse 10, he says, Moses said, honor your father and your mother, and he who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death. That's from two different quotes, Leviticus 20, verse 12, or excuse me, Exodus 20, verse 12, and Leviticus chapter 20 in verse nine. So he's quoting both the positive and negative of honoring your father and mother. You're to honor them in Exodus, and if you don't, here's the consequences, you're gonna be put to death. And understanding the importance here of God teaching his people to honor the people that he has chosen to give you life. He has given these people, your father and your mother, to give you life, to instruct you in the ways of him as he has commanded. This is a very serious thing. And what the Pharisees have done is change it into a way of making yourself rich while looking good for those around you. And that's the ultimate goal of Corban. So the law of Corban was from the Mishnah. And it said that if you committed anything to God, if you simply said, this is set aside for God, no one else could lay claim to it. So let's think about all the different things throughout the teachings of the Old Testament, whenever he says, in a certain year, all your property goes back to who owned it before. There's taking care of your parents, taking care of your kids. There's so many things that this applied to. But the law of the Jewish people said, if you just said this over here, is set aside for God, no one else could make a claim to it. In fact, the priests, if you went to them and tried to absolve yourself of Corbin so that you could use that, they would make you pay them to absolve from Corbin. That's how seriously they took it. They said, if you set this up to commit it to God, no one else can touch it. Now, here's the thing. The only reason that was set up for that is that you could escape from having to pay your debts. You could literally use it to not have to pay your debts. You could use it to not have to fulfill the law of God, which was to take care of your father and your mother. You could use it to get around just about any other law. So what the Pharisees have done is they've taken one law and pitted it against itself. Because the oath of Corbin, they said, fell under the oath regulations of Leviticus. And they pitted it against the

commandment to honor your father and mother in this example. They are literally using the law of God to pit itself against each other for their own personal gain, so that they could then live the rest of their life with all of their wealth, ignore their responsibilities and debts, and then when they died, all that money would go to the temple. They are literally using the commandments

of God to subvert the commandments of God. And so Jesus calls them on this. And he says in verse 12, you no longer leave him to do anything for his father and mother. So the instructions of the Pharisees, remember he's talking to the Pharisees, you're absolving these men from the commandments of God. You're not leaving them anything to care for their father and mother. And then you are thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition, which you have handed down and you do many things such as that. So as we come full circle here, and we've come all the way to the end of the text, it's pretty safe to say, and I hope I get a lot of head nods from this, did the Pharisees add to the word of God? Yes. Did God judge them for that?

Yes. Was it a most severe judgment?

Yes. And who is the one that gets to interpret the law? Because I know what you're thinking, okay? So if the Pharisees weren't supposed to interpret in the way that they did, why does Jesus do that? Because if you think about it

for just a minute, in the Sermon on the Mount, what does Jesus spend the entire Sermon on the Mount doing? You have heard it said, but I'm correcting it. And then he gives you the law and says, but what it really means, the heart of the law is this. So isn't Jesus doing the exact same thing the Pharisees are doing? Technically he is, but because of who he is, he has the right to. Because Christ is Yahweh. And what did we establish last

week with Ego and Me? Mark has just told us this is Yahweh. He revealed himself passing by the boat. He condescended to his people saying, I am. He calmed the storm. He has showed who he is. And now he comes along and says, no, no, you don't get to interpret that. You leave that to me. And then for us as believers, what do we have the benefit of? In John 17, Jesus says, if I go, I will send a helper to you that will help you understand the truth. And then you apply that truth to your life as the spirit works in your life through progressive

sanctification to help you understand the law, to help you encourage each other around you, and to help you see that the heart of the matter, is there something the matter with the heart? That's the heart of the matter. There's something wrong with the human heart. And there is only one solution,

brothers and sisters, and that is Christ. That is Christ. These unconverted men, and I stand here and tell you, these Pharisees were unconverted as we would think. They are not people of God. These unconverted men have a heart problem. The heart of the matter is they needed a new heart. And by God's grace, we as men and women who have sinned and also need a new heart have been given, that heart of stone has been removed and we've been given a heart of flesh. And Ezekiel says in that same passage that that law will be written on the heart of his people. Do you see how big of a difference this is? This is a watershed passage because Christ is setting up not only the, destruction of the Jewish people with Jerusalem, telling them that this is not just for you, the covenant that's coming is for the Gentiles as well. But he's condemning them for breaking the very covenant that God made with them at Mount Sinai. They are worshiping God with a heart of stone, while portraying themselves as more holy than everyone else. Think about that for a minute. Now, as you think about that and you get in your minds all the condemnation that you have for them, when was the last time you added to the law of God to make yourself look better? Placing your regulations and stipulations on someone else that are not scriptural. So understand, this is the authority that we have. If it says in here, do not kill or do not murder, excuse me, you don't murder. But if you add regulations to the black and white law of God, that it does not expressly forbid or condemn, you are doing the exact same thing that they were doing. I have to be careful of that. How many of us parents in here, how many of us add regulations and stipulations for our children that we don't hold for ourselves? How many of us do that? Because I do it. I hold my children to a higher standard than I hold myself. Shame on me. What about your coworkers? What about your fellow church members? What about your family members? How many times have you started a fight at a holiday meal because you wanted to show yourself as holier than them? I'm just throwing out examples. I'm not calling anyone specific. I don't know. I don't think I've been to any of your family gatherings, I don't think. But you guys get the point that I'm trying to make. The heart of the matter, is there something the matter with the heart? And these Pharisees showed it very, very clearly. But the beautiful thing is even with all of that, the solution is Christ. It's Christ. If your heart is still a stone, and you're still locked in sin and you're still a slave to sin, Christ will set you free. By faith and repentance and a gracious gift from God, He will set you free. So if you're here and you know that your heart, or if you're listening to this



message from another time and you know that your heart, you've been convicted that your heart is a heart of stone and you're in bondage to sin and you can't help but sin, I wanna tell you there's a solution

for that. And His name is Jesus. And we'd love to talk to you about that. And if you're a believer here and you profess Christ and you know that your heart of stone has been removed and you've been given a heart of flesh, there's still a solution for the issues that you're having and adding to the law of God or taking away from it. And His name is Jesus. and you look to him and you look to his active obedience and you understand that he fulfilled every aspect of the law that God gave, gave his life and then imputed that righteousness to you. And when God sees you, he sees you as 100% righteous. And you know that even though you can't fulfill that law, he has done the things of that righteousness

that are required by fulfilling that law in his time on earth and has given that gift to you. And in praise and glory, you look to him as the spirit works on your heart, that heart of flesh and continues making it more like him. And so in conclusion, I want us to see that we have Christ and we must rest in what he has done. The one who can tell us the law and his proper interpretation is the one that indwells you, brother and sister. And we have that hope in him and him alone. He is the one who has the authority to rightly interpret and apply the law. And we must reject man's desire to both add to and take away from the law. So let us guard our hearts and minds this week, because one of the most divisive things in the body of Christ is elevating the law of man to the level of the law of God. It does nothing but cause division, disunity, and takes our eyes off of Christ. And then we become much more obsessed with holding the standards of man so that no one thinks poorly of us. Instead of confessing our sins, loving each other and helping each other carry the burdens that we're commanded to do. That's how the function of a church should work. And the standard for that confession is the law of God. Amen. Let's pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we're so thankful that we can have a better picture of your law today, the perfection that it is, knowing that we cannot add anything to it. We cannot take anything away from it. And I pray, Lord, that we would not get caught in the trap of swinging the pendulum one way or the other. Help us not to take away from the law, for it is beautiful. Help us not to add to the law, for it is perfect. Help us to trust the authority that indwells us by the Spirit. And I pray that Your Spirit would work in each of us this week to understand Your Word, apply it to our hearts, and help us to glorify You in all that we do. And I pray that every person here rests in what You have done. In Your holy name I pray, amen.