

The Lord & the Legalists

Mark 7:1-13

ABC 4/23/23

Are you ready for a serious question? Are you ready for me to step on some toes? *Are you a legalist?* Listen to these descriptions & see if they describe you:

- Legalism creates an external standard of righteousness to earn God's favor.
- Legalism makes a person think God accepts them on the basis of what they do.
- Legalism lives by a standard of conduct that goes beyond the teaching of Scripture.
- Legalism happens when you create personal convictions for yourself in areas not specifically addressed in God's Word, which can be right for you. But as soon as you elevate your personal convictions to the authority of Scripture, you become a legalist. Not only that, a legalist will judge others because they're not holding to your convictions.

Again, *Are you a legalist?* The Pharisees were experts at it. Here in Mk 7, Mark returns to Jesus' being opposed by the religious leaders from Jerusalem (2:1-3:6; 3:20-30). He doesn't use any kind of time or geographical link to the things that happened in chpt 6. He probably introduces Jesus' teaching on *clean* & *unclean* things here in order to prepare for the episodes that follow, where Jesus travels to Gentile territory & extends His grace & interacts with *unclean* Gentiles. Jesus will heal the daughter of a Syrophenician woman (24-30), give hearing & speech to a deaf & mute man in the Decapolis (31-37), & feed an apparently Gentile crowd of 4,000 (8:1-10).¹

1. The Challenge (1-5) The last conflict with the religious leaders came in the Beelzebul episode in 3:22-30 at the end of a series of controversies (2:1-3:6). That too involved the experts in the law, **scribes** who'd come from Jerusalem. Here we read **1-2**

Jerusalem is the center of opposition to Jesus. It's there the final showdown will take place. This foreshadows Jerusalem's hostility toward Jesus that will ultimately lead to His death. The accusation against the disciples isn't one of hygiene or of breaking Covid regulations but of ceremonial impurity. They accuse the disciples of eating with **impure** or **defiled** hands which simply means *common* but came to be used of anything that was ritually impure or unworthy of God's presence. Mark explains for his Gentile readers that this means **unwashed** hands. The OT law didn't

¹ Mark L. Strauss, *Mark*, p 294

require washing of hands before meals, though priests were required to wash their hands before entering the Tent of Meeting & offering sacrifices (Ex 30:20–21; 40:12, 30–32). The scribes & Pharisees apparently understood these priestly ordinances to be applicable to all Israel, since all of God’s people were to be holy. By Jesus’ time hand washing was widely practiced by all Jews. As one rabbi expressed it according to a later tradition, *whoever eats bread without previously washing the hands is as though he had intercourse with a harlot.*² They took this seriously. Rabbinic traditions, codified in the *Mishnah* in the 2nd & 3rd centuries, cover regulations concerning right & wrong ways of washing hands, the quantity of water to be used, the position of the hands, & the type of vessel to be used. 3

Mark explains the **impure, unwashed hands** for his Gentile readers in Rome who weren’t familiar with Jewish customs. He explains the issue of ceremonial washing. This washing was part of the **traditions of the elders**. What’s that? Is it a book of the Bible? No, it’s the oral body of tradition interpreting the law that would eventually be collected in the *Mishnah*. God’s Word was believed to be too ambiguous to establish & govern the Jewish community. The oral traditions gave in depressing detail how the law should be fulfilled in real-life circumstances. The oral tradition built a wall around the law in order to protect it. They considered their traditions as a fence around the law. Eventually, it became more important than God’s own Word. The rabbis wrote, *The words of scribes are more lovely than the words of the law*. As they talk to Jesus, the religious men believed it was a greater offense to transgress the teaching of the rabbis than to transgress the teaching of Scripture. This fencing of the Law began well enough, but as the years passed it produced some famous absurdities. In an effort to protect the Sabbath from being broken through unintentional labor, they came up with an amazing list of prohibitions, fences to keep them from working on the Sabbath. For example, looking in the mirror was forbidden on the Sabbath, because if you looked in a mirror on the Sabbath & saw a gray hair, you might be tempted to pull it out & thus perform work on the Sabbath. The rabbis argued about a man with a wooden leg: If his home caught on fire on the Sabbath, could he carry his wooden leg out of the house or would that break the

² Talmud, *b. Sota 4b*

Sabbath? You couldn't wear false teeth on the Sabbath because if they fell out you'd have to pick them up & that would be working. One could spit on the Sabbath, but you had to be careful where. If it landed on the dirt & you scuffed it with your sandal, you would be cultivating the soil & thus performing work.³ The Sabbath, of course, was just one concern of many. The biggest concern of the Mishnah was *cleanliness* & most of that concern was about ritual washing, like this in Mk 7. Over time, the Jewish people began to measure their spiritual condition in terms of external conformity to traditional requirements & ceremonial rituals, rather than in terms of sincere love for God & humble obedience to His Word (Is 66:2).⁴ Ceremonial cleanness was such an important issue that about 25% of the Mishnah is dedicated to it, about 250 pages in this edition (MISHNAH). The word Mark uses to describe the washing is an unusual one & could mean *with a fist, by a fist*, or even *to the end of the fist*. It may refer to washing with a handful of water, up to the wrist, or with cupped hands.⁵ The Mishnah (*Yad* 1:1) specifies that a *quarter-log* of water be used, about the amount of an egg & a half & hands are rendered clean by pouring water over them up to the wrist (*Yad* 2:3). Before Jews ate they ceremonially cleansed their hands. One rabbi taught it would be better to walk 4 miles to get water, than to eat with unwashed hands. Another rabbi who suffered imprisonment under the Romans nearly died because he used his ration of drinking water to ritually wash up.⁶ Another insisted that, *Whosoever has his abode in the land of Israel & eats his common food with 'rinsed' hands, may rest assured that he shall obtain eternal life*. Do you see how this *fence* became an idol? Rabbi Eleazer said, *He who expounds the Scriptures in opposition to the tradition has no share in the world to come*. The *Talmud* records, *It is a greater offense to teach anything contrary to the voice of the Rabbis than to contradict Scripture itself*. These traditions became untouchable. Mark next explains a good Jews' responsibility after going to the market place. **4a**

You can see how this gets out of control, right? If you're in the marketplace you might bump into Samaritan & become unclean. You might touch something a gentile touched & become unclean.

³ R. Kent Hughes, *Mark: Jesus, Servant & Savior*, pp 162–16

⁴ John MacArthur, *Mark 1–8*, p 342

⁵ Marcus, *Mark 1–8*, p 441

⁶ William Barclay, *Mark*, p 167

What do you do? The word **cleanse** here could be a reference to full immersion in a *mikveh*, a Jewish ritual pool, before eating. The implication is that in the push & shove of the marketplace, contact with persons & things could easily cause ritual defilement. Mark summarizes that this is just the tip of the iceberg. **4b**

The Pharisees thought they were holy because they obeyed the Law as defined in their traditions & avoided external defilement by washing **cups, pitchers, & copper pots**. Whereas Jesus taught that a person who obeys the Law externally can still break the Law in his heart & that external defilement has little to do with the condition of the inner person. We all have a sinful nature that needs cleansing, a will that needs to be broken, & a heart that needs transforming. Simply conforming on the outside doesn't change who you are internally. Having briefly explained ritual purity, Mark now moves to the accusation made by the religious leaders. **5**

They don't accuse the disciples of breaking the OT law, but of failing to **walk according to the traditions of the elders**. In a variation of the cliché that a man's home is his castle, the Pharisees believed that a man's home was his temple.⁷ God demanded for the people to **be holy because I ... am holy** (Lev 19:2). To the Pharisees, holiness wasn't restricted to the temple area but extended to the entire land. By clarifying God's commands they didn't think they were voiding them but making them applicable. The tradition was designed to give people a map that charted what was permissible or prohibited, clean or unclean, so they could live a life of holiness. The **tradition of the elders** attempted to interpret God's commands for everyday life. It specified not only how to wash your hands, but where to lay your napkin during a meal so as not to defile it & when & how to sweep up. If one were to ask, *How do I approach almighty God?* the psalmist says, with **clean hands & a pure heart** (Ps 24:4). But what does that mean? The rabbis would say that when you eat, you're approaching the throne of God, & must cleanse one's hands, hold the wine in the right hand, & the oil in the left. The traditions gave everyday acts of life holy significance & reminded them of God & how you can show devotion to God. From their perspective, Jesus was completely out of control

⁷ Stern, *Jewish NT Commentary*, p 92

because He ignored these rules.⁸ It's easy for us to think these religious leaders were nuts for their emphasis on traditions like this. But we don't realize how subtly these things began & how spiritual they seem to be, especially in the beginning. Many rituals or traditions seem to be built on unshakable spiritual logic:

- Doesn't God want us to honor Him in everything we do?
- Didn't God command the priests to wash their hands before serving Him?
- Shouldn't every faithful follower of God have the same devotion as a priest?
- Isn't every meal sacred to God?
- Shouldn't we cleanse our hands before eating?

When the questions are put this way, it's easy to say, *Yes, of course*. But if you have a tradition that has the same weight as the Word of God, you're wrong. These scribes & Pharisees didn't see it that way. They challenge Jesus in public & want to shame Him as a false Teacher. If His disciples have violated purity rules, then He must be held responsible as their teacher. Yet never do we find Jesus criticizing or disobeying the written law of God. But it seems as if every day, everywhere He went, He violated their traditions.⁹

2. The Response (6-13) Jesus responded, not by answering their question but by accusing them of hypocrisy. He would later give an answer to His disciples (17-23), but to the religious leaders He offers no explanation or excuse. Instead, He confronts the unbelief that characterized the false system they embraced. Jesus offers 2 responses (6-8 & 9-13).

A. Supported by the Prophets 6-7

Jesus quotes from Is 29:13 & says Isaiah prophesied about these religious leaders saying they're nothing but hypocrites who cleverly swap their own words for God's commands. Hand washing, from the Pharisees' perspective, was a sign of holiness that allowed one to come close to God. Jesus insists, however, that they've drifted away from God. The charge of hypocrisy must have caused surprise. The Pharisees have asked about a matter of pressing concern to them, & nothing to them seems remotely hypocritical about giving thoughtful attention to matters of purity & the traditions of the elders. Jesus says they're hypocrites because they were merely giving God lip

⁸ David E. Garland, *Mark*, p 280

⁹ R. C. Sproul, *Mark*, p 156

service rather than a true dedication of their heart. This resulted in the elevation of their own traditions above the commands of God. Therefore, Jesus says, **8**

Jesus exposes their rigid & superficial religion as something that permits one to transgress God's direct commands because man's tradition said it was OK.

B. Supported by the Law (9-13) Jesus starts with a statement from the prophets & then moves to an illustration from the law. Again, He hits them. **9**

His words were probably ironic sarcasm. While the Pharisees prided themselves in keeping the law, Jesus congratulates them for become experts at **setting aside** or *rejecting* or *nullifying* God's commands so that they can keep their **traditions**. 5x in this passage the word **tradition** is used (3, 5, 8, 9, 13), with the last 2 contrasting *God's* commandments with *human* traditions. Jesus now quotes from Moses. **10**

Jesus quotes from 2 passages. The 1st is the 5th of the 10 commandments about honoring parents (Ex 20:12; Dt 5:16), & the 2nd concerns the penalty of death for not doing so (Ex 21:17; Lev 20:9). Honoring parents was among the highest of values in biblical times. **Honor** means far more than obedience & included caring for the physical needs of ones' parents in their old age. To **speak evil** can mean to *slander*, *revile*, or *curse*. Just as anger is equivalent to murder (Mt 5:21–22), so withholding support for parents is equivalent to cursing them. Many Jewish traditions upheld honoring parents & made declarations like, *A son is bound to support his father even if he has to beg for him*. God's commands were clear. He commands **honor** for parents. **11-12**

Jesus says, **but you say...** & the **you** is emphatic. With their traditions the religious leaders found ways to get around God's clear command. In their cold, hard-hearted, self-centered greed, they'd created a tradition that would allow them to escape having to obey God's Word in honoring their parents. Jesus cites the example of **Corban**. What's that? A Bible college in Salem, right? Not what He was referring to. **Corban** is a Greek transliteration of a Hebrew term meaning *offering* or *vow* (Lev 2:1, 4, 12, 14). Mark explains it to his Gentile readers as **given to God**. In rabbinic literature, **corban** is often used of something dedicated to God & so unavailable for human use. Using this, a son could withhold support for his parents by declaring his property to be dedicated to God & thus

couldn't be used for his parents. It was a vow to give something to God at some point, but not now. The OT also commanded that vows must not be broken (Num 30:2; Dt 23:21–23). A child could simply say: *Folks, I'm sorry. I'd like to help you, but everything I have is Corban, committed to the Lord, & I can't give God's things to you.* This practice permitted a person to use wealth that had been committed to God for himself during his lifetime. He just couldn't spend it on anyone else. This tradition sought to sanctify a way for a person to get out from under the God-given responsibility to give honor to their parents. There was a legitimate place for Corban, but this practice should never have been used to cancel out a commandment given by God. The Pharisees' tradition turned the law on its head by insisting that the sanctity of the vow was more important than the parents' right to support. But Jesus assumes that such a vow is void because it violates God's command to honor parents. One can't avoid God's commands by resorting to legal loopholes, of which the Pharisees had many. One example involves the rules about limiting one's travel on the Sabbath to what was called a *Sabbath-day journey*, which was a very short distance. The rabbis allowed a person to get around this law by stashing personal objects at various points along the route he planned to travel on the Sabbath. The reasoning was that placing a personal item on a piece of real estate established residency. Thus, the person could go from *home to home* on the Sabbath until he reached his destination, never having traveled more than a Sabbath-day journey between stops. This was clearly *loophole-ism*, an attempt to get around the law of God regarding the keeping of the Sabbath.¹⁰ Jesus exposes these sticklers for the law as more interested in legal tricks than the requirement of love, more devoted to unwritten traditions than the written law, & more concerned with property than care of one's parents. Because they set aside God's will with their tradition (7:8, 13), Jesus trashes their tradition. He's the champion of God's law over scribal law. Jesus condemns this use of **corban**, not just because honor for parents supersedes vow-taking, but because the selfish motives behind such traditions are contrary to God's heart & the true spirit of the law. While the motives of the person making such a vow were

¹⁰ Sproul, pp 162–163

probably not pure, the religious leaders made it even worse by refusing him the right to rescind the oath. If that's not bad enough... **13**.

Jesus sums up the problem: By following their human traditions, they've nullified God's law. & this was only one example of their violating God's Word with traditions. There were many more ways they'd done this as well. Their traditions trumped God's truth & they did **many things such as that**. This passage is pretty straightforward & not hard to understand. But what does it mean for us? Let me ask again, *are you a legalist?* The religious leaders were so satisfied in their religion they saw no need for Christ to save them from their sins. Is that you? There are people today who are so comfortable in their external, occasional, church-going, prayed-a-prayer-once Christianity they see no need to cry out for Jesus to save them from their sins. Christians are humble, Pharisees are proud. Christians are sincere, Pharisees are hypocrites. Christians are sympathetic, Pharisees are hardened. Christians are concerned with their internal attitude, Pharisees are concerned with their external appearance. Externalists focus on man's traditions, internalists focus on God's truth. Legalists are in bondage to forms, Christians are freed by faith. Pharisees show outward piety, Christ-followers cultivate a pure heart. Of course, everyone in every age has to apply the Word of God to situations in real life & traditions always arise from this. Jesus doesn't reject tradition as such. Societies need traditions to function. One person has written:

*A state cannot be run by a constitution without legislation. Likewise the Jewish nation could not be run by the Written Torah alone, without the orderly application of it & in addition to it implied the concept of tradition. But just as a country's legislation cannot contradict or supplant its constitution, so too tradition ... cannot violate or alter God's word.*¹¹

Christianity is 1st & foremost a matter of the heart. & authentic faith is intended by God to be an inside out experience. Having a spiritually healthy heart makes the difference between being real or phony, being a godly person or a Pharisee, having a personal relationship or a fake one. In Joel 2:13 God told the Israelites to, **Rend your heart & not your garments. Now return to the Lord your God.** Don't put on an external show, deal with your heart before God. In 1 Sam 16:7 God reminds Samuel & us, **God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the**

¹¹ Stern, p 92

LORD looks at the heart. The heart is the authentic you, who you really are, where you desire, deliberate & decide. The heart is the place of spiritual activity, the seat of your inner spiritual life. A spiritually healthy heart is essential to a right relationship with God. That's why 2 Chron 16:9 says, **the eyes of the LORD move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His.** Like the Marines who're looking for a few good men, God is looking for a few good hearts.

The Bible says those who abide in His Word are His true disciples (Jn 8:31), not those who just know the Word.

The Bible says those who behold the glory of Christ are those who are transformed into the same image of Christ (2 Cor 3:18), not those who simply said a prayer or walked an aisle.

The Bible says those who are doers of the Word are those who build their lives on a foundation of the Word (Mt 7:24), not merely those who just attend church.

The Bible says those who bear fruit prove themselves to be disciples of God (Jn 15:8), not those who bear no fruit (Heb 6:8).

The Bible says genuine Christians will walk in a manner worthy of their calling (Eph 4:1), not those who just talk Christianese.

Does this mean all traditions are bad? No. We as Christians have traditions as well. Paul encourages his churches to hold fast to the **traditions** he passed on to them (1 Cor 11:2; 2 Thes 2:15; 3:6). The creeds of the church give us clarification of biblical truth. While each generation needs to return to Scripture to confirm its spiritual heritage, we'd be much the poorer without the wisdom of the ages, the traditions of our elders. We all have traditions. We meet at 11. Is that mandated in Scripture? No, that's left over from when most people were involved in farming & ranching. 11 a.m. church gave them time to do their morning chores beforehand. Are the songs we sing (whether hymns or worship songs) better than what Jesus & the apostles sang? No, it's tradition. *Tradition* is a good thing & a necessary part of life. We tend to be really hard on the Pharisees (as Jesus was) & their many traditions, but their original motivation was a noble one. The OT law couldn't cover every area of life, nor could it account for new & changing circumstances. The Jewish religious leaders therefore sought to *make a fence for the Torah*,¹² both to guard against its

¹² Mishnah, Abot 1:1

violation & to define its limitations. Traditions become evil when they run counter to God's purposes expressed in the His commands. Traditions become dangerous when people are blind to how they undermine God's commands. Traditions become corrupt when people become more devoted to upholding them than obeying God's direct commands. Tradition becomes bad when it's expressed through legalism & hypocrisy. *Legalism* means elevating human traditions to the level of God's law. We should recognize that what we call *legalism* today was to the Pharisees a sincere effort to apply God's will to everyday life. All law requires interpretation. The religious leaders had made ritual washings mandatory & criticized Jesus' disciples for not practicing them. Jesus rejects their rules. What they call the **traditions of the elders** (3), He calls **traditions of men** (8) & **your tradition** (9, 13), to be contrasted with **the commandment of God** (8–9) & **the word of God** (13). In American Christianity righteousness has sometimes been defined by refraining from things like attending movies, playing cards, dancing, listening to certain types of music, long hair on men, drinking, & women wearing pants or piercing their ears. While almost anything in life can be abused, practices like these aren't inherently wrong & so become matters of personal conscience. This doesn't mean that we shouldn't have standards. Standards aren't necessarily legalism. Legalism is claiming that such non-biblical things are standards of righteousness, or worse yet, are necessary for salvation.

Not everything in the Christian life is a matter of right & wrong. Some things, many things, are simply matters of personal conscience before God. The Scriptures don't command ritual washing before meals. If you want to do it, then fine. Do it unto the Lord & without a sense of spiritual superiority before your brothers & sisters. If you don't want to do it, fine also. Don't do it unto the Lord, & don't look down upon those whose conscience compels them to do so.

The other great danger of traditionalism is hypocrisy. When religion becomes a series of dos & don'ts, there's a tendency to simply follow the rules & miss the heart of God. Jesus' conflict with the religious leaders reveals that religious observance shouldn't clash with God's Word & common sense. Jesus accuses the Pharisees of being hypocrites not because they had high standards, but because they emphasized nonessential things & ignored the weightier matters of the law, such as

love & justice. The prophets rebuked Israel for keeping the letter of the law, for going through the show of religion with their offerings & sacrifices but failing to love & obey God with their hearts (Is 11:11–16; Jer 7:22–23; Hos 6:6; Amos 5:21–27). Jesus addressed this same issue of the true spirit of the law in His SOTM. The command against murder has behind it the greater purpose of respect for human life created in the image of God. Anger & hatred are equivalent to *murder in the heart* because they violate this greater principle (Mt 5:12–48). James is referring to the same higher law when he speaks of *the perfect law of liberty* (Js 1:25) & the **royal law to love your neighbor as yourself** (2:8). Jesus illustrated the true spirit of the law in His care for outcasts. He defies purity laws by reaching out & touching a man with leprosy (1:41), allowing a hemorrhaging woman to touch Him (5:27–28), & taking the hand of a dead girl (5:41). In each case He demonstrates that these purity laws were never intended to forbid acts of love & compassion. Reaching out in love actually *fulfills* the purity laws, since it reflects God’s character & so too His holiness. Of course, there’s something else going on here as well. When Jesus touches these impure things, He isn’t defiled, but rather brings cleansing & purification. He isn’t made unclean but instead cleanses & restores life. This is the transformative power of the kingdom of God.

Whenever **the word of God** is invalidated by **tradition**, as in the case of the Pharisees & scribes, it’s an abomination & an offense. Those who truly love God cherish His Word & eagerly desire to submit to its commands (Jn 14:15), even if doing so requires breaking with tradition. Our own Christianity can be just as dead & just as legalistic as the Pharisees. We sometimes add traditions to the essentials of the faith, apply them legalistically, & treat them as if they’ve been ordained forever by God. When we do so we’ve become just like the Pharisees.

Jesus’ teaching had a direct impact on Paul who tells the Corinthians to eat whatever was set before them (1 Cor 10:27) & told the Romans **nothing is unclean in itself** (14:14). Quit judging others (14:4, 10, 13). Quit putting stumbling blocks in their way (14:13). Learn to live in harmony (15:5) & build up one another (14:19) rather than walls of separation. We can imagine how we’d respond if guests turn up their noses at the food we offered them because it somehow didn’t meet their religious standards. What if their rejection of our food also implied that we were somehow

impure? It would hardly make us eager to hear their message. In applying this passage, we should ask ourselves, *Are there subtle & not so subtle ways in which we communicate to others that they are 'dirty' & unfit for contact with us? How does this hinder our ability to evangelize them? What is appropriate to distinguish us as people of God & what isn't?* A danger lurks in drawing no boundaries at all so that there is no difference between us & the culture around us. Purity concerns are boundary markers. One can see from Jesus' reproach of the Pharisees' tradition, however, that boundaries drawn too tightly choke out love. Worldliness excludes God from our lives, but we must be careful not to exclude the worldly from the love of God. One writer confesses:

God does not always respect the boundaries we create & carefully protect. Drawing lines in the theological sand may serve our purposes; separating good guys from bad guys & can be helpful, because it is hard to know that you're on the inside unless you know who is on the outside. But God has a studied disregard for anxieties of this sort. Prodigal grace keeps spilling over into alien territory.¹³

If you've been living with an empty heart, turn to Jesus, cry out to God to open your heart, give you faith to believe, & repentance to change. A legalist tries to save themselves. Depend on Christ to rescue you. Trust in the work of Jesus on the cross for your sins & nothing else. Christianity is always a religion of the heart. God isn't satisfied with words. He isn't satisfied with behavior. He isn't satisfied with knowledge. He isn't satisfied with public acts of religion. He wants your heart. Why? The heart is the center of your personhood, the seeds of your thoughts, desires, emotions, motivations, & values. The heart is your control center, the steering wheel of your life. What rules your heart, will rule your life & your behavior. Who owns your heart? God is after your heart not simply your hands. If He doesn't have your heart, He doesn't have you. It's not enough to jump through behavioral hoops when your heart is being ruled by other gods.

If you're legalistic & someone offends you, not because they've broken God's law but because they have broke your tradition, & so you aren't loving to them & extending to them the mercy & grace of Jesus, the traditions you're holding to have caused you to break the clear commands of God. Would God say something like this to us?

- They attend church, **but their heart is far from Me.**

¹³ Donald W. McCullough, "Serving a Wild Free God," *Christianity Today*, 4/3/95, p 17

- They read their Bible, **but their heart is far from Me.**
- They pray eloquently, **but their heart is far from Me.**
- They contribute money, **but their heart is far from Me.**
- They do ministry, **but their heart is far from Me.**
- They love to sing, **but their heart is far from Me.**
- They talk to others about Jesus, **but their heart is far from Me.**

Don't let Jesus' description of the scribes & Pharisees be true of you. Mt 23:23-28 says,

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also.

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.