

SUGGESTED  
SCHEDULE**WELCOME**

*Where does sin  
come from?*  
2–3 mins.

**DRILL TIME**

*Jesus' miracles*  
3–5 mins.

**W.O.W!**

*Tradition*  
3–5 mins.

**HISTORICAL  
CONTEXT**

*Timeline*  
2–3 mins.

**BIBLE  
INVESTIGATION**

*Mark 7*  
20–30 mins.

**LESSON-AT-HOME**

*Mark 7:8*  
3–5 mins.

## OVERVIEW

The chapter opens with the Pharisees making accusations against Jesus' disciples again. This time, they are appalled that the disciples do not wash their hands according to the elders' tradition. Jesus responds by rebuking them for their letting go of God's commandment in order to hold on to man-made tradition. This just demonstrated that they were worshipping God with their lips, not with their hearts.

Jesus goes on to teach the disciples that it is the sin in our hearts that makes us unclean, not our unwashed hands or the eating of unclean foods. While the religious leaders were all about outward ceremonial cleansing, Jesus looks to cleanse hearts. He even exposed the hearts of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law with the example of how their traditions kept them from following God's command to honor their parents. They didn't understand that it is the heart that is truly unclean and sinful.

The chapter ends with two more healing miracles. First, Jesus casts out demons of a faith-filled Syrophenician woman's daughter. Then, he heals a deaf and mute man. His popularity continued to grow throughout and beyond the region.

## PREPARATION

Read and meditate on Mark 7 this week. **Use flannelgraph figures or other pictures to illustrate the lesson.**

## TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT

Children know the difference between being clean and dirty. Use this understanding to help them see that it is the "dirtiness" of their hearts that is the real problem. The Pharisees were blinded to their heart problem by their own customs and rituals. Pray that God would open the eyes of your children to their own sinfulness and their need for the cleansing blood of Christ. Work on explaining the important truth that they sin because they are already sinners. Too many people define sinners as only those who sin a lot. Use examples that will help them to see that it is what comes out of their hearts that is the problem, not what goes into their stomachs. Then let them know of God's power to clean up dirty hearts!



## WELCOME

### **Greet the students. Welcome visitors.**

**Say:** *I have a tricky question for you: Do you sin because you are a sinner, or are you a sinner because you sin? **Allow answers.** Some people believe that you become a sinner after you sin a lot. God's Word teaches that we sin every day because we are born sinners. We come into this world with sin already in our hearts.*

*So can you and I blame other people for being the reason for our sin? No! Sin starts in our own hearts, as we just said. Listen carefully today for when Jesus talks about our sinful hearts and the source for our problems.*



## DRILL TIME

*Let's have our DRILL TIME now—our weekly opportunity to review what we have learned in the past.*

**Today's questions:** *How was the paralytic man able to be healed by Jesus? What did Jesus do when the storms almost swamped his boat? How was the woman with a terrible bleeding problem healed by Jesus? What did Jesus do for Jairus' daughter? What did Jesus do for the crowd of five thousand men?*

### **Call on volunteers or select students to make attempts.**

#### **Answers:**

1. His friends lowered him through a hole in the roof.
2. He rebuked the winds and the waves.
3. The woman touched Jesus' cloak with faith.
4. He raised her from the dead.
5. He fed them with just five loaves of bread and two fish.

**Say:** *These are some amazing miracles that Jesus performed. They demonstrated that He has power and authority over sickness, disease, sin, Satan and his demons, and even death. How does Jesus have this authority? [He is the Son of God.] Why wouldn't you put your faith in Jesus who is Lord of all?*



## W.O.W!

Our W.O.W! (Word of the Week) this week is **TRADITION**. Write the word on the board. This is a word you may have heard before. Can anyone tell me what it means? **Allow answers.**

A **TRADITION** is sort of like a habit. It is something you do because you have always done it that way. A **TRADITION** can also be a certain way of thinking that you've inherited because of the family or culture you have been born into.

For example, you all probably have certain **TRADITIONS** for holidays like Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter. Decorating a Christmas tree is a **TRADITION**. Eating turkey on Thanksgiving is a **TRADITION**. Hiding Easter eggs is a **TRADITION**. Can you think of any other **TRADITIONS**? **Allow answers.**

**TRADITIONS** can be good, but they can also be bad. Sometimes, we make certain rules into **TRADITIONS** that go against God's Word and God's ways. Sometimes we think certain ways about people or things out of **TRADITION** instead of from the truth.

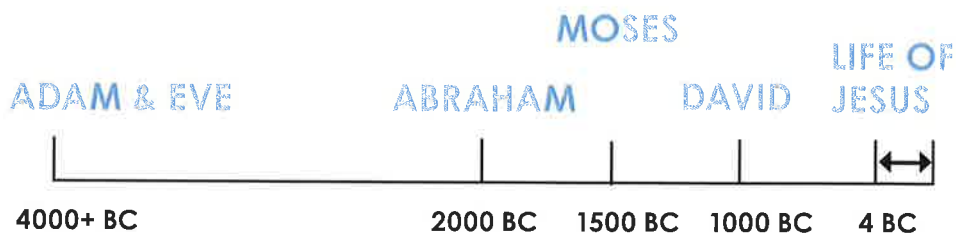
Watch for how Jesus deals with wrong **TRADITIONS** today!



## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

If necessary, draw this timeline on the board, and show the students when these events took place.

### This Week's Timeline





**Introduction:** *Last time, we ended with Jesus walking on the water to His disciples. How did they respond? [They were afraid because they thought Jesus was a ghost!] For the second time, Jesus calmed the winds and the waves, saving His disciples from a storm. Were large crowds still following Jesus? [Yes!] Jesus was healing people all the time.*

*Let's start reading in Mark 7 today. **Read Mark 7:1-2.***

<sup>1</sup> Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, <sup>2</sup> they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed.

**Discussion:** *Do you remember the Pharisees and the scribes? They accused Jesus of blasphemy and actually believed that He was possessed by Satan. They also accused Jesus' disciples of breaking the Sabbath law and not fasting correctly. What are they accusing Jesus' disciples of doing now? [Not washing their hands.]*

*Let's see why unclean hands upset them. **Read verses 3-4.***

<sup>3</sup> (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, <sup>4</sup> 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.)

**Discussion:** *Did you hear our Word of the Week? The Jews had a TRADITION that people had to wash their hands in a special way before they ate. God's law didn't tell them to do this special washing, but it had become a TRADITION. As you just heard, they had other "washing" TRADITIONS as well.*

*Let's read more. **Read verse 5.***

<sup>5</sup> 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?"

**Discussion:** *Do you hear their accusation? They wanted the disciples to follow the TRADITIONS they had set up.*



*Let's see what Jesus says about that. **Read verses 6-8.***

<sup>6</sup> 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; <sup>7</sup> in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ <sup>8</sup> You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

**Discussion:** *Did you hear that? Jesus accused the religious leaders of holding so tight to their TRADITIONS that they let go of what? [The commands of God.] In other words, these men felt it was more important to follow their own ways than God's ways. They were talking like they were worshipping God, but they were really worshipping their own TRADITIONS.*

**Application:** *We can do the very same thing. We can follow our own rules instead of God's rules. We can act like we are worshipping God when our hearts really aren't worshipping Him.*

*Listen to more of Jesus' rebuke. **Read verses 9-13.***

<sup>9</sup> And he said to them, “You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! <sup>10</sup> For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother’; and, ‘Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.’ <sup>11</sup> 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)— <sup>12</sup> then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, <sup>13</sup> thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do.”

**Discussion:** *Jesus gives these religious leaders an example of how bad their TRADITIONS are. God's Word says to honor our parents. Their TRADITIONS allowed them to say that their money was dedicated to God so they didn't have to take care of their aging parents. Is this honoring your parents? [No!] People are to take care of their parents when they are older. So these religious leaders were teaching against the commands of God by teaching people to follow their TRADITIONS.*

*Listen to what else Jesus says. **Read verses 14-15.***

<sup>14</sup> And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup> There is nothing outside a person



MOST RELIABLE  
MANUSCRIPTS LEAVE OUT  
MARK 7:16.

that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.”

**Discussion:** *The Pharisees had a TRADITION that said a person was “unclean” before God if they didn’t wash their hands in a special way. Does that make you unclean before God? [No.] Jesus says it is what comes out of a man that makes him unclean. What does Jesus mean?*

*Let’s find out. Read verses 17-23.*

<sup>17</sup> And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. <sup>18</sup> And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup> since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup> And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

**Discussion:** *TRADITION said that certain foods and ways of eating food made a person unclean before God. Jesus explains that what goes into a person’s stomach isn’t what is important. Instead, what comes out of our HEARTS is what is important to God. Our hearts are what make us unclean because they are full of sin. Did you hear what was in our hearts? That’s a horrible list of sins, isn’t it? Read verses 21-22 again.*

**Application:** *Just as we said in the beginning of class, we sin because we have sin in our hearts from birth. Jesus makes it clear that we have heart problems, not handwashing or eating problems. God wants to change your heart!*

*Let’s move on. Read verses 24-25.*

<sup>24</sup> And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. <sup>25</sup> But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet.



**Discussion:** *Since Jesus had done such amazing miracles, it was impossible for Him to go anywhere secretly—even when He traveled out of Israel. A woman heard He was in town and begged for His help. What was the problem? [Her daughter was possessed by an evil spirit.] Does Jesus have the power and authority to cast out evil spirits? [Yes.]*

*Let's see what He does. Read verse 26-30.*

<sup>26</sup> Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup> And he said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” <sup>28</sup> But she answered him, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.” <sup>29</sup> And he said to her, “For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter.” <sup>30</sup> And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

**Discussion:** *Now don't miss what happened here. This woman was a Greek, not a Jew. The Jews were God's people, not the Greeks. So, Jesus was telling this woman that He came to take care of God's children, not other people. But, Jesus healed the daughter anyway. Why? [Because the woman showed faith in Jesus.] She knew that she didn't deserve to be helped by Jesus, but she asked for just “crumbs” from Him anyway. Jesus showed her grace and cast out the demon. What mercy!*

*Let's continue. Read verses 31-32.*

<sup>31</sup> Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. <sup>32</sup> And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him.

**Discussion:** *More crowds and more people in need of healing. Can Jesus heal a man who is deaf and mute? [Yes.] Why? [Because Jesus is the Son of God.]*

*Let's finish the chapter. Read verses 33-37.*

<sup>33</sup> And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. <sup>34</sup> And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, “Ephphatha,” that is, “Be opened.” <sup>35</sup> And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and



he spoke plainly. <sup>36</sup> And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. <sup>37</sup> And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, “He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak.”

**Discussion:** *Did you hear how people were AMAZED again at the mighty power of God? Jesus keeps telling people not to tell others about their healing, but they continue to spread the word. Do you think more crowds will follow Jesus? I think so!*

**Conclusion:** *In this chapter, we again see people who put their faith in Jesus, receiving grace and healing. But we also see others who reject Jesus and God’s Word in order to hold on to their own TRADITIONS. Our own TRADITIONS of thought and action will keep us from Jesus if they are against God’s Word. Remember that, and we’ll read more next time.*



## LESSON-AT-HOME

**Distribute the “Lesson-At-Home” bookmarks. Read the Scripture Memory verse (Mark 7:8) together.**

**Mark 7:8 (ESV)**

<sup>8</sup> “You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

**Say:** *These are the words of Jesus to the Pharisees and the teachers of the law. These men should have held on to God’s commands more than anyone else. Yet, they held on to their TRADITIONS instead. We need Jesus to change our hearts so that we follow God instead of our own ways and TRADITIONS!*

**Review the verse a couple of times.**

**Direct the students’ attentions to the bottom half of the bookmark. It includes reminder points of today’s lesson that can be discussed with their parents and reviewed during the week.**

**Close in prayer and dismiss the students.**



# LESSON-AT-HOME

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Mark 7:8

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## LESSON REVIEW

Mark 7

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Investigating God's Word.  
Summer Quarter ~ Lesson Six

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