

Spring Term 2025

Jesus – Disrupter

Week 7: Jesus – Teacher

Mark 7

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¹ The Pharisees and law teachers from Jerusalem were constantly snooping around Jesus ² and spotted some of his followers eating without washing their hands. ³ External cleanliness was a major feature of the Jewish way of life, strictly enforced by the religious leaders, ⁴ and they had numerous other regulations governing the ceremonial washing of pots and pans. ⁵ 'We can't help but notice that your people disdain the traditions of our ancestors,' they sniffed. 'Just look at their hands – filthy!'

2

⁶ 'The prophet Isaiah hit the nail on the head when he described your hypocrisy:

*"Your faith is barely skin deep;
no amount of fine words can disguise your cold hearts.*

*⁷ Your worship doesn't move me,
because you've replaced my life-giving word
with heavy rules of your own devising."*

3

⁸⁻⁹ 'You've abandoned God's commands in favour of your own traditions,' Jesus continued. ¹⁰ 'You claim to revere Moses who demanded honour for parents and specified severe penalties for anyone abusing that sacred duty; ¹¹ yet here you are, busily finding ways to undermine that teaching. You allow yourselves to sidestep responsibility for your parents by claiming that the money they need in their old age is reserved for God instead. ¹² If people do that, you dismiss any duty they have to the older generation. ¹³ And that's just one example of your contempt for God and his word.'

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¹⁴ Jesus called the crowd closer and said, 'Listen to me, all of you – listen and understand. ¹⁵ Don't fall for the claim that living God's way is a matter of external cleanliness. God sees beneath appearances to all the things that really corrupt you. It's not what goes in to your mouth that corrupts you, but what comes out.'

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¹⁷ Later, his followers asked him what he'd meant. ¹⁸ 'Can't you see?' Jesus replied. 'How can what you eat make you morally corrupt? ¹⁹ Food doesn't go to the heart but simply passes through the body. ²⁰ Spiritual and moral cleanliness is about your heart. ²¹ That's the origin of everything that pollutes you morally – dark thoughts, immorality, thieving, killing, adultery, ²² greed, malice, deceit, envy, slander, and arrogance. ²³ All these come from inside you and make you unclean. Washing your hands or crockery is neither here nor there.'

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²⁴ Moving on, Jesus went to the region of Tyre and entered a house, hoping to keep his arrival quiet; but word soon spread that he was there. ²⁵ Indeed, one woman came straight to the house and begged Jesus to drive an evil spirit from her little girl. ²⁶ She wasn't Jewish, but Syrian. ²⁷ Testing her faith, Jesus said, 'I need to feed the children of Israel first rather than throwing their food to dogs.' ²⁸ 'Of course, Master,' she shot back, 'but the dogs are happy enough with any scraps that fall from the table.' ²⁹ Her response was all Jesus needed. 'Go back to your daughter,' he said. 'You will find her well again.' ³⁰ The woman found her daughter sleeping peacefully, the evil spirit gone.

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³¹ Jesus moved on again, to Galilee and a region known as 'the ten towns'. ³² A man who couldn't hear and barely speak was brought to him, his friends begging Jesus to touch him. ³³ Taking the man away from the crowd, he touched the man's ears, spat and touched his tongue. ³⁴ Looking up to heaven Jesus sighed deeply, and said, 'Open!' ³⁵ As he spoke the man found he could both hear and speak clearly. ³⁶ Jesus ordered the people not to tell a soul, but the more he insisted, the more they blurted out the news. ³⁷ How could they contain what they had seen and heard? 'Is there anything this man can't do?' people wondered. 'He can even restore hearing and speech.'

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