

# “Using Religion to Escape Being Religious”

Based on Mark 7:1-8 (NIV)

February 17, 2019

Rev. Roger Madden, preaching

*Mark 7:1-2*

*1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus and*

*2 saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were "unclean," that is, unwashed.*

† Eating with “unwashed” hands was not a health issue but a religious issue.

† A person could become clean and thus acceptable to God if that person went through a ceremonial washing.

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† Clean hands and clean feet represented a pure heart.

† Over the years, this simple ceremony became more burdensome with bureaucratic details.

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† To the scribes and Pharisees, these rules and regulations were the essence of religion.

† These religious leaders were using outward religious practices to avoid the demand of an inward religion.

*Mark 7:5-8*

*5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?"*

*6 He (Jesus) replied, "Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

*7 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.'*

*8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men."*

† The word *hypocrite* in the original Greek means, “an actor.”

† The Pharisees acted religious (look at what I do) when in their hearts they were not.

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† I, at times, only act like I am religious.

† If I am only religious in what others see, I am not religious.

† I need to be a Christian in all aspects, seen and unseen, of my life.

**Applying Today's Message to My Life:**

† What traditions do I, or my family, have?

† When have I responded to a situation because it was a “tradition” and not because it was the right thing to do?

† When have I outwardly acted religious but was really not being a Christian?

† What opportunity will God give me to be a Christian in all aspects of my life, seen and unseen, this week?