

August 28, 2020

Tradition!

Allowing God to set the rules

Mark 7:6-18

He 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 merely human rules.^{'[b]}*

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

⁹ And he continued, "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe^[c] your own traditions! ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother,^{'[d]} and, 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.'^[e] ¹¹ But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— ¹² then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

"Tradition!" shouts Tevye in the Fiddler on the roof. It's a way of life. It's the way we do things. It's the way it's been done for years.

You have them. I have them. There is nothing wrong with tradition....until it begins to re-write obedience and love.

In this passage, that's exactly what has happened. The Pharisees found a way to assign their belongings to the Lord so they could keep it for themselves rather than give it away or bless even their own parents. Example: "I'm going to keep this \$100 so I can give it to God **someday**, even though you might be starving and could use it to buy food." This was a new religious law - or tradition - that they wrote for themselves. It was not God's idea.

The American church...Has become much more American than church. Our traditions of what church must be and do based on American success or selfish desires has made us less of the loving, discipling body God has desired. Many have strayed toward legalism and religious control. Many have forgotten all the truth of God and become social clubs letting people find that whatever they do, it's ok. Not every church is this, and some are very solid in their love. But each person and each congregation must at times re-check our course. Have we wondered into a self-serving tradition? Do we do what we do because we made it up or because God said so?

These are questions for individuals to answer. These can only be answered by seeking God in prayer and in His Word. Let's continue discovering together what God wants for his church and for the community in which he has placed us.