

Tradition

Mark 7:1-13

Tradition Literally means 'that which is handed down, or handed over, and received.' Morally traditions are neutral. Traditions are neither good nor bad. Traditions are things we just do because our parents did them. They are what cultures do. Certain ways are just handed down or handed over to the next generation to continue those ways. Standing and placing our hand over our heart for the national anthem, singing happy birthday, certain foods eaten on holidays, use of certain decorations at special times are examples traditions. Good things. Actions and ways that give meaning to our lives, define identity for the culture. We may speak of our culture as folk culture, things handed down from generation to generation. High culture is the best of music, literature, and art. It remains and has stood the passage of time. Pop culture are those things that are here today and gone tomorrow. They do not stand the test of time. Traditions bind us together and inform who we are.

But when traditions come in conflict with God's Word, something needs to give. So, the question arises, 'Are we who the culture says, or are we who God says we are?' When we lose the foundation of the Word of God, we gravitate to how the culture defines us. We see it all too often today in with marriage, the value of life, gender, and ... This should not really surprise us because we are all sinners. When society's views on these matters just mentioned creep into the church to be accepted, there is a problem.

It is imperative that we not let the traditions of man, the opinion of society replace the Word of God. Marriage the way God established it is nonnegotiable, The value of human life is nonnegotiable, Gender is not what we say we are but what God created one to be, as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. The Word of the Lord endures forever.

The battle is not new. Isaiah's prophetic preaching deals with the same issues. God could see the people and their leaders were going through the motions. Though worshiped with their mouths, their hearts were far from God. Their words did not line up with actions.

Jesus confronts the pharisees with their tradition such as hand washing and pot and cup washing. It was if the pharisees hearts far from God and His ways. They put more emphasis on their rules, and traditions than on their relationship with God. Though they talk a good game they are far from living as God intended them to live. They live by the traditions of what has been handed down by their elders instead of the command of God. And they had a fine way of skirted the commandment that made them look good on the outside, but on the inside, they were far from God.

They pulled this off with a technique called Corban. Corban, things dedicated to God. So, they would declare all their possessions, money, and all as dedicated to God. On the surface it sounds good and pious, but when put into practice possessions did not need to be immediately given to God. One could still live on their land. It was an intention of designation. And the things

where you could look super holy and religious without costing you one red cent. And they used it to neglect God's 4th commandment. "Honor your father and mother." Father and mother brought together in marriage as one flesh would have children whom they were to love, honor, and cherish. The family as the building block of society God places this commandment as top priority on the second table. God protects father and mother. Children are not to despise or anger them no matter who weird children may think they are. No matter, God says honor them. So, when parent grew old in need of support, they would say my money in corban and cannot be used to support my aging parents. The tradition called corban effectively did away with the 4th commandment. And Jesus is not pleased one bit!

There were many traditions that the pharisees had which squashed the word of God. Here is the thing, we do it too. How many times have we come to worship and just go through the motions?

Worship experience....

How did this come about? Well, there are two significant 'handing over' or 'handing down' in the bible. The first is when Eve handed the forbidden fruit over to Adam to eat. This handing over plunged the world into sin. Therefore, we are born sinful and unclean. You and I received this tradition from man, not God.

Many, many, many years later, Judas Iscariot handed Jesus, the Son of God, over and He was crucified. This handing over got the world, you, and I out of the mess of sin. This tradition is of God and is the reason Jesus was born. To take on our sins, and Jesus hands over to his disciples this gospel of salvation to preached, and forgiveness of sins to be announced for Jesus' sake. The apostles have handed this gospel of God's love for the fallen humanity from generation to generation. We can this gospel and hand it over to friends and neighbors.

God sending His Son has in the words of Isaiah done a most wonderful thing. To win forgiveness for our sins. To make us His very own, children of God, and promise us eternal life. Even we may receive what the world hands down in great dose when compared to what is handed down through God's Word. What is handed down by humans looks good and even holy at times. But the gospel for us is that what is handed over to us by God is His savior Jesus and the Holy Spirit in whom we have and being. Through God's Word we have true wisdom from above, not the ever-changing opinions of the culture. The word of the Lord endures forever, and Lord is forever, while this world will some day come to an end.

The Word of God became flesh and through baptism has united Himself with your flesh. In Jesus the Bride groom and we church His bride are one and have life. As St. Paul writes, "Just as Christ loved the Church and gave himself up for her, in order to make her holy by cleansing her with the washing of water by the word, so as to present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle." Christ does this so we might have a future with him in heaven. We cannot have a better spouse than Jesus who cares and loves us! And this is one great tradition to live by.

