

## Mark 7:8

***"For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men--the washing of pitchers and cups, and many other such things you do."***

Traditions, thinking about Thanksgiving and Christmas coming up, there are probably traditions that your family does that other families don't do. I remember growing up as a kid, we would get up early Christmas morning and open our presents. But some other families may have a tradition of opening them at midnight Christmas (Christmas Eve night) or some families will wait until later in the day on Christmas day. But regardless of what your Thanksgiving or Christmas traditions are, that's between you and your family, and there is no rule book saying how each holiday is supposed to be spent.

But what about traditions we as Christians have, you know those ones that we have heard about or even brought upon ourselves? Mark, talked about these things right before today's devotional verse:

† **Mark 7:1-4** *Then the Pharisees and some of the scribes came together to Him, having come from Jerusalem. Now when they saw some of His disciples eat bread with defiled, that is, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands in a special way, holding the tradition of the elders. When they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other things which they have received and hold, like the washing of cups, pitchers, copper vessels, and couches.*

"Did you wash your hands?" we can hear our mothers ask us as kids when we sat down at the dinner table. But this was asked and done by our mom's for sanitary reasons.

But the traditions of the Pharisees went way beyond sanitary reasons. But why would they even have such a tradition? Well, Halley's Bible Handbook says this in regard to what Mark 7:1-4: "The washing of the hands that is here referred to was not for sanitary purposes, but purely a religious ceremonial, not of the Law, but an invention of the Scribes."

The Mishnah is basically a book of laws taken from God's law. It would be like we say you can't speed while driving a car. And the Mishnah would say, you can't speed while driving a car above the posted speed limit. (It doesn't say this, but just an example for us non-Jewish people)

But let's get past those details and ask ourselves, why do we have the traditions that we do in the church or that we even impose upon ourselves? One example would be Communion. I have been in churches that have it on the first Sunday of the month. Some churches do it once every five weeks. And at some churches I have been to have it out every Sunday for each one to decide when they want to do it.

Which one is right, and which one is wrong? Well the answer is in the bible, and what Paul quoted Jesus as saying?

† **1 Corinthians 11:25** *In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."*

*"As often as you..."* So neither one is wrong or right, it's a tradition that your church does, and if they do it once a month or every Sunday, it's not wrong.

But what traditions have we made for ourselves that no longer become a tradition, but rather a burden? Plus how many of our so called "traditions" have we burdened others with? I've heard of one pastor that says you have to read your bible every morning when you first get up. He is half right, because we should be reading our bible every day, be it one verse or several chapters. Me, I'm a morning person (don't hate me lol) so I read every morning to start my day. But some of you are not morning people. You are more attentive and focused on your reading in the evening, which is fine. The bible does not say you must read through the bible at least once a year and this is the time you should do it.

So this next week, examine things that you do in the name of Christianity and ask yourself, *"Why am I doing this or not doing that? Is it in the bible or a tradition or burden I have imposed on myself, or even others?"*

† **Romans 14:4-6 & 13** *Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*