

We've Always Done It This Way

Matthew 15:1-9

Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?" - Matthew 15:3

Main Point: Following the traditions of man rather than the commands of God is dangerous.

Introduction: Use the following questions to introduce the topic of discussion -

When is the last time you washed your hands? Be honest!! (Leaders: break out the hand sanitizer NOW)

What family traditions do you have? How have those traditions become unspoken laws in your home?

In Matthew's narrative we see religious leaders who have come quite a distance to debunk Jesus and his teaching. They have become jealous of his following and were trying everything in their strength to tear him down in front of the crowds. But Jesus saw through to their hearts and exposed them as the hypocrites they were. While they were pointing out Jesus' disobedience to traditions and rituals, Jesus pointed out their disobedience to God's word. The sacred cow of tradition and "always doing it this way" had become a requirement for those who wished to look pious. This attitude still creeps into our faith and Christianity today.

Before saying "We've Always Done it This Way" about any tradition consider:

1) **THE ORIGIN OF THE TRADITION. Read Matthew 15:1-2.**

What break with tradition were the Pharisees and scribes upset about? Why was this a big deal to them?

Read **Numbers 19:1-8** which was the basis for the "tradition of the elders." How did this cleansing ritual apply to the disciples or the Pharisees for that matter?

What traditions do you see in Christianity and the Church which people fight over? Are you aware of their origin?

What kind of traditions have you broken with recently? What were the origins of that tradition?

2) **THE DANGER OF THE TRADITIONS OF MEN. Read Matthew 15:3-6.**

How does Jesus say the Pharisees are breaking God's commandments from **Exodus 20:12** and **21:17**? What are religious leaders doing that gets Jesus fired up? See **Mark 7:9-13** for a parallel passage in which Jesus explains further.

What do you sense is the basis for the religious leader's tradition with the Corban? What is the danger of following this, or any other tradition, instead of following God's commands?

Read Paul's words to the **Colossians** in chapter **2:8**. How can the traditions of men "take you captive?" Continuing in **Colossians 2:13-15**, what does a life built upon Christ, rather than tradition, offer?

3) **THE HEART OF THE TRADITION. Read Matthew 15:7-9.**

What was the heart of the hand washing tradition? Who were they trying to please by doing it?

Read **Matthew 23:25-26**. What did Jesus have to say about the external when it came to "always doing it that way?" How does this relate to what He says as you continue in **Matthew 15:16-20**?

Jesus said in **Matthew 6:21** "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Where is your heart when it comes to the way it's always been done? What is the litmus test for deciding whether or not to uphold a tradition?

Apply It:

Are your traditions bringing you glory, or are they bringing God glory? Evaluate why you do things the way you do them. What traditions/habits need to be aligned with God's commandments? What specifically can you do this week to take action in doing things God's way and not your way?

Pray:

Father, forgive us for putting our ways above your ways, our thoughts above your thoughts, and our laws above your commands. Help us make honoring you in our traditions a priority. Use your Holy Spirit to show us where we've strayed and give us the courage to change.

Coming up at VillageChurch:

Nov. 19th - The Lord's Supper

Nov 29th - Operation Christmas Child Packing Party

Dec. 3rd - VillageKids Happy Birthday Jesus

Dec. 10th - A Village Christmas