

Traditions, Nostalgia & Mother's Day – Mark 7.1- 13, 5.14.17

Introduction

1. Mother's Day Traditions
 - a. Serbia – Children's Day, Mother's Day & Father's Day
 - b. Stephanie's dad: Well, kids do you think we should keep mother for another year?
 - c. We really need to exam our assumed traditions and nostalgic ways. This is not an age based message. The biggest traditionalist today are young adults, not senior adults.
2. Mark 7.1-13
3. Big Idea: Man-made traditions and living in the past greatly limit our experience of God's advancing work.

Explanation of Mark 7

- V.2 – 4: This ritual handwashing had nothing to do with hygiene, but it was done to make them ceremonially clean; their observance proved they were acceptable in God's sight and respected religious tradition. The OT does talk about washing yourself when you touch certain "unclean" things – dead body, runny sore, etc., but it does not say anything about this practice of making yourself ceremonially pure through washing your hands. It was a man made tradition. They developed a procedure for everything; b/c following rules is an easy way of demonstrating your religiosity. This was the Jews tradition/cultural practice. This is the way they decided life was to be done.
 - Every culture has its own beliefs and practices that it says this is the way life is to be done. Some of those beliefs and practices line up with God's word and others do not.
- V.6 – hypocrites – "Play actor." You have on a mask and you pretend to be one thing that you are not.
- V.8 – You ignore God's truth and substitute your own cultural beliefs and practices. Traditions are just the transmission of beliefs and customs from one generation to the next.
- V.9-12: The human tradition of Corban. Dedicating a certain amount of money to God and stating that it could not be used for anything else, even your needy parents. The Scriptural principle Jesus points to is that a child is to honor their parents, but they developed their own rule that said you can bypass that responsibility if you have dedicated a certain amount of money to God.
- V.13 – They put their tradition above the Bible and it pushes people further from the truth. This is just one example among hundreds.

Traditions

1. Family traditions and many cultural traditions can be wonderful and honorable, like Mother's Day.
2. Traditions are typically seen as something from the past that is to be carried into the future, but traditions are both past and present **cultural customs and beliefs that are expected to be accepted.** Traditions aren't limited to a date or an event, but are a part of our everyday life.

- a. Women wearing pant suits to church -
<http://www.rustyzipper.com/shop.cfm?viewpartnum=146677-A12133>
 - b. Bi-racial marriage -
https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/f/fa/Little_Rock_integration_protest.jpg/500px-Little_Rock_integration_protest.jpg
 - c. Civil rights; Women were lesser
 - d. KJV only in church.
3. Today the new traditions: Sexual expression and gender identity; marital relationships; all spirituality is equal; you can say what you want and use whatever language necessary.
 4. What does Jesus say un-biblical traditions do? Ignore and substitute (v.8), sidestep (9), and cancel (13). We are saying our traditions are either more relevant or they give a fuller meaning to life than the Word of God.
 5. V.7 – Isa.29. Traditions that contrary to Scripture have an appearance of respectability, but they are a farce. They are meaningless and worthless and only push you away from the truth. Some of the new traditions of today are not opening doors of freedom, but widening the road to hell. They are masquerading as intelligence and freedom and are keeping people from entering into true wisdom and real liberty. In the long run, they are not helping people, but hurting.
 6. Appl – what are the traditions you feel pinched by? Which ones do you use to sidestep the Word of God? Most traditions are subtle. EHS – Unspoken Family Rules. What family traditions are you embracing – we don't question; we appease others; we never question authority; we don't show our emotions or we let people know exactly what we think whether they ask or not; What are the traditions that are so engrained in your family that you just assume that's the best way to do life.

Nostalgia

1. Def - a wistful desire to return in thought or in fact to a former time in one's life, to one's home or homeland, or to one's family and friends; a sentimental yearning for the happiness of a former place or time
2. Don't long for "the good old days." This is not wise. Eccl.7.10
3. You hear this all the time, especially from conservative Christians. We long for a simpler, purer day that might have existed in our childhood or momentarily in the 40's-50's.
4. What does the past provide:
 - a. The Bible tells us to learn from our past – these were given to you as examples
 - b. The Bible tells us to connect current joys and pleasures with past – Cross
 - c. The Bible tells us to be grateful for the past – remember you used to be
 - d. The Bible tells us to reflect on our past to be encouraged in the present –
 - e. **The Bible never tells us to long for the past or desire to return to the past.**
5. Jesus said, "“Anyone who puts a hand to the plow and then looks back is not fit for the Kingdom of God.”"
6. If you keep looking to the past, you will miss the current move of God in your life and world. You will never be content; you'll always have a reason things are not so good; there will always be something negative; you'll be like E Or or Puddle glum.
7. When it comes to the past, our memories are very selective. The past will always look better than it actually was. It was never as good as we think it was. Nostalgia is a distraction and for some it is an idol that they worship.
8. Some want to go back and undo something. There is a regret element. "I wish I could change...make that different..." The Word of the Lord to you is "I make all things new all the

time!” He is always in Rom.8.28 mode – he was with Moses, Joseph, Paul & Peter and he’s doing it with you!

9. For the believer, **the best is yet to come** both in this life and the one to come. We live in the light of the Kingdom and the increase of His gov’t.
 - a. Things are not the same; we have greater revelation now; greater liberty; greater opportunity, etc.
 - b.
10. Remember Jesus’ words to John the Baptist, when John was so confused about whether or not Jesus truly was the Messiah. “Go tell John what you have seen and heard – the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life and the Good News is being preached to the poor.”
 - a. The Kingdom is advancing – more people are coming to faith in Jesus than at any other time in history, more churches are being planted, more people are being trained, more missionaries are being sent, more money is being spent, more miracles are happening, more good deeds are being done, more love is being shown...this is not the hour to look back, but to look out and see the work of our great God. In 10 years, the gospel will be preached to the whole world.
11. Believers should be the most positive, joyful, contented people on the planet, because we see the really BIG Picture. We don’t need to be griping and complaining and wishing things were the way they used to be. God isn’t back there anymore. We need to praise Him for what He’s doing now and press ahead to where He currently is.
12. Phil.3: I press on to possess that perfection for which Christ Jesus first possessed me. ¹³ No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, ¹⁴ I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us.
13. Don’t look back and long, but look ahead and rejoice. It only gets better.

Conclusion

You may have to go back to go forward. Undo family traditions that have limited, etc. They act as a tether

Picture of a hot air balloon tethered.