

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE

SERMON OUTLINE

By James M. Duncan, Pastor

JANUARY 21, 2018

“Truth or Tradition? Or The Heart of the Problem Is the Problem of the Heart”

Matthew 15:1-20

Last Sunday we looked at the parable of *The Prayer That God Always Answers* from Luke 18:9-14. What we saw was two men who went to the Temple to pray one was a **Pharisee** and the other a **Publican or Tax Collector**. We learned some very important things about the Pharisees.

Now we come to our scripture passage today and again we are introduced to the **Scribes and Pharisees** from Jerusalem. They were the big wigs from denominational headquarters in Jerusalem. They have come to Jesus on a fact-finding mission, to try to validate whether they should put their approval on Him or not.

Their accusation about “**washing hands**” (V-2) had nothing to do with cleanliness. They were referring to the ceremonial washings of the rigidly orthodox Jews. If Jesus rejected the sacred traditions of the nation, then He was a heretic! These traditions were originally the “oral law” and this oral law was finally written down and became the *Mishnah*.

Tradition is something *external*, while God's truth is *internal*, in the heart. People obey tradition to please men and gain status (Gal. 1:14), but we obey the Word to please God. Tradition deals with *ritual*, while God's truth deals with *reality*.

Unfortunately, there are many “evangelical traditions” often labeled as “**STANDARDS**” in Baptist churches today, nothing but **man-made teachings** that are really **Preferences** that are often

considered as authoritative as the Word of God - *even though they contradict His Word*.

I. THE ACCUSATION OF THE JEWS

Vs. 1-2 Did you really come all this way to talk about washing your hands before you eat? They had intricate rituals for handwashing... things which are proven to have nothing to do with hygiene, and everything to do with tradition. It was religious hocus pocus.

II. THE ANSWER OF JESUS

Vs. 3 He shows them their hypocrisy, that they are walking outside the lines themselves, and these lines were drawn up by God Himself!

Vs. 4-6 This example Jesus gives them deals with the 5th commandment. But these leaders had devised a clever way of getting around this commandment. They called it ‘**corban**’...a gift dedicated to the Lord.

Vs. 7-8 “**Hypocrites**” comes from a Greek word literally meaning ‘play actor.’ The actors in Greek theatre wore masks.

III. THE APPLICATION OF JESUS

Vs. 10-11, 15-16 Peter didn’t get it. **Vs. 17-20** Jesus says, what you eat may make you sick, but it won’t make you a sinner. Unhealthy, but not unholy. It’s not about the hands, but the heart.

Food never touches the heart. But what comes out of the mouth begins in the heart, and these things defile a person. **Vs. 12-14** Jesus says, Big deal, don’t worry about it. Make sure you aren’t offending God, not those who want to have a problem.

You see:

- ◆ Tradition exalts people. Truth humbles people.
- ◆ Tradition creates pride. Truth creates holiness.
- ◆ Tradition is impersonal. Truth is intimate.
- ◆ Tradition only affects the outside. Truth penetrates the heart.
- ◆ Tradition produces hypocrites. Truth produces servants of God.

Jesus never said He was the way, the **tradition**, and the life, **but the truth!** (John 14:6). But Jesus did say in **John 4:24**. “God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

Why did you come to church today? Why did you sing songs?
Why did you serve?

Is it habit and tradition, or is it a heart filled with love.