

EQUIPPING THE SAINTS

“...FOR THE EQUIPPING OF THE SAINTS FOR THE WORK OF SERVICE...” ~ EPHESIANS 4:12

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THOSE WHO HUNGER FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

By Kyle Pope

During the Lord's *Sermon on the Mount* recorded in Matthew chapters five through seven He offers a list of personal characteristics of those considered “**blessed.**” One characteristic in this list declares, “**Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled**” (Matt. 5:6, NKJV). Let's notice three points from this regarding our walk with God:

1. God's People Must Hunger to Know What is Right. Sadly few in our time are people with a true thirst to know what God's word teaches is right. Many have either convinced themselves that they can know by their own intuition what is right, or they do not believe that there truly are things that are *right* (and thus things that are *wrong*). If we are to be pleasing to God we must recognize that His revelation offers us a true standard of right and wrong. God's people must have a fervent craving to know and understand this standard.

2. God's People Must Hunger to Do What is Right. Once a person comes to know what is right he comes to a crossroads. Will he follow what is right or retreat into ignorance and error? If we are to be pleasing to God we must want more than anything else to do what He commands. That is what it truly means to *do* what is right. The Holy Spirit teaches, “**Let no one deceive you. He who practices righteousness is righteous, just as He is**

righteous. He who sins is of the devil” (1 John 3:7-8a).

3. God’s People Must Hunger to *Be Right with God.*

French philosopher, author, and journalist Albert Camus once rashly wrote, “The need to be right” is “the sign of a vulgar mind.” If he meant that in reference to a desire for self-glorification or the praise of man we might agree. If, instead, he was referring to a desire to guide one’s life in such a way as to avoid wrong, error, and sin there is absolutely nothing “vulgar” about that at all! We should desire to be able to stand before God forgiven of sins, having accepted His grace in obedience to the gospel of Christ, and thus being found in a condition in which we are *right* with God. The Bible makes it clear although it has always been true that, “**It is God who justifies**” (Rom. 8:33), He has set before us a path we must follow in order to receive this justification. The message of Christ is God’s way of making men and women right with Him unto the salvation of their souls (see Rom. 1:16-17). This message must be believed and obeyed (Rom. 10:16; 2 Thess. 1:8; 1 Pet. 4:17). There is no other way to be right with God, and God’s people must hunger and thirst to follow the path by which God provides this righteousness. *[rom olsenpark.com]*

TRADITION AS ERROR, TRUTH, AND CHOICE

By Doy Moyer

There is a difference between traditions that are simply traditions, and tradition as truth. A tradition is something that is handed down as a teaching or a practice. To simplify, we can note that traditions may come in at least these forms:

1. Error. A tradition can be passed down that is erroneous. Jesus challenged this kind of tradition in Mark 7, where the Pharisees had made their tradition of “**Corban**” such that it violated God’s Law. Wrong-headed traditions

need to be challenged and overthrown. This is not to be done, however, just based on mere preference or whim, but on the truth. If a practice or teaching is in error, then truth needs to prevail, lest we find ourselves under Jesus' rebuke: **“Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?”** (Matt. 15:3).

2. Truth. God expected His truth to be passed down through time, and this, too, is tradition, as Paul wrote: **“So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us”** (2 Thess. 2:15). If we are teaching new doctrines that cannot find actual biblical support for the sake of doing non-traditional things, then we have conflated tradition as truth with tradition as error or tradition as choice. Tradition as truth should always be upheld and practiced, and failure to do so will put us out of line with God's revealed will.

3. Choice. By “choice” in this context, I mean that the tradition is neither necessary nor wrong. Not all traditions are necessary in the sense of being required truth (#2). They might help facilitate the teaching of truth, and they might be reasonable expedients depending on the circumstances (e.g., meeting twice on Sundays or using song books), but they are not necessary. In this case, they are also not wrong, but the danger is that we get used to doing something by choice and then confuse these traditions with truth itself. That is, if the tradition by choice is changed, we fight like it is the truth that is being compromised, when it is, instead, just choices that are under scrutiny. On the other hand, some try to change tradition by choice and may take an approach that is offensive and disrespectful toward those who prefer the

tradition to remain as is. There is no need to change such a tradition just for the sake of change, but neither is there a reason to hold on to it if the reason for changing it is warranted. People need to be reasonable, respectful, and open-minded in dealing with tradition as choice.

For the sake of clarity and unity, it is vital that we understand the differences between these types of tradition. So many divisions and problems can occur because we just label something “traditional” without further clarifying what we mean by it. Someone may fight against a “tradition as truth” while thinking it is “tradition as choice,” or vice-versa, and problems ensue. First, we should figure out where the tradition we are considering fits. Is it error? Is it truth? Or is it choice? Then we can look at options: 1) reject it if it is error; 2) accept it and practice it if it is truth; or 3) consider our options and weigh the effects if it is choice. Divisive attitudes should never be allowed to prevail, especially over tradition as choice. *[from mindyourfaith.com]*

NOTES: _____

AM LESSON:
Biblical Authority:
An Introduction

PM LESSON:
Aeneas, Tabitha, & Cornelius
(Acts 9:32-10:48)

**“GO THEREFORE AND MAKE DISCIPLES...”
(MATTHEW 28:19-20)**