

ULC Sermon Study Resource

Idols - Traditionalism

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Prayer: Pause for a few moments to go to the Lord in prayer. Ask that He would draw near to you in this time, and open your heart and mind to hear His Word.

Icebreaker: Share a great piece of advice that has stuck with you throughout your life.

Reading: Mark 7:1-23

Outline:

- I. Defining Traditionalism (v. 1-5)
 - a. The issue Jesus has with the Pharisees is their insistence that traditions are on the same level as God's commands.
 - b. Traditionalism is the conflation of man made traditions with God-given commands.
Q: *Why are the Pharisees upset? What was this tradition about?*
- II. The Problem of Traditionalism (v. 9-13)
 - a. The Pharisees ignored God's commandments in favor of human traditions.
 - b. Traditionalism allows us to excuse ourselves from the greater commands of the Scriptures.
Q: *What problem did Jesus have with the Pharisees' use of traditions?*
- III. The Remedy for Traditionalism (v. 14-15)
 - a. Jesus highlights that traditionalism only deals with external factors, and that it cannot address the brokenness in our hearts. Traditions alone cannot heal us, but the Gospel can.
 - b. We use tradition to remind us that God was faithful in the past, and we can trust that Jesus is working in the present.
Q: *What do traditions fail to truly address? (v. 21)*

Reflection/Application Questions:

- 1) Can you identify any examples of traditionalism today in the church?
- 2) What do we fear losing when we change things from 'the way they have always been'?
- 3) How do traditions excuse us from dealing with the commands of Scripture?
- 4) How can we ensure that we are using man made tradition only as a reminder, and that we are not elevating it to the level of God's Word?
- 5) When we gather around the Word of God in worship, we are set free from traditionalism. What does this mean to you?

Suggestions for further study:

- Deuteronomy 7:9 **Q: *Why is there no need for us to place our trust in tradition?***
- Colossians 3:2 **Q: *How does this relate to the concept of traditionalism?***
- Matthew 5:19 **Q: *Why is it important for us to recognize when traditions are seen as equal to the commandments?***

Closing Prayer: Gracious God, we are so often driven by fear of change, which can cause us to elevate our traditions to the status of your Word. We ask that you would break our love of tradition and open our eyes to the ways you are working in the world right now. We ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.