

Date: Sunday, January 17, 2021 Scripture: Mark 7:1-13

Transcript

The title of this morning's message is **The Tragedy of Tradition**. The Tragedy of Tradition. Mark chapter 7, beginning in verse 1. Will you follow along as I read this for us? Mark chapter 7:1...

The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem, 2 and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed. 3 (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) 5 The Pharisees and the scribes asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?" 6 And He said to them, "Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:

*'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.
7 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'*

8 Neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men." He was also saying to them, "You are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition. 10 For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH'; 11 but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; 13 thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that."

Since the beginning of time, man has tried to approach God on his own terms. For example, we read in Genesis the story of Cain and Abel. Cain thought that he could come and offer his worship to God by bringing the fruit of the ground, instead of offering an animal sacrificed to God like his brother Abel did. God had prescribed that an offering of worship must be the sacrifice of an animal. And yet Cain thought that he could just do it in his own way. I'll just bring the fruit of the ground. I'm a farmer and I'll just come and bring the fruit that I have. And if I come and bring that, then God would be pleased with me. He will accept my sacrifice. He would accept my worship.

Or how about Israel at Mount Sinai? God had told the people not to make an image and worship it and all the people in Exodus Chapter 4 verse 7 they said this all that the Lord has spoken, we will do and we will be obedient. We'll do it God, whatever You tell us to do, we will do it. But eight chapters later in Exodus 32, the people want Aaron to make an idol for them, so that they could worship it, because Moses was taking too long upon the mountain.

So what does Aaron do? He makes an idol for them. And what did the people do? They worship it. They thought that they could worship God their way and that God would be pleased with them.

Or how about Nadab and Abihu? In Leviticus Chapter 10, you heard of them. These guys are the sons of Aaron the priest. And they thought that they could offer strange fire before the Lord, but God had not commanded them to offer this kind of worship to Him. But they brought it. They offered strange fire to God and what did God do with them? Kill them. He killed them. These guys thought that they could come and offer a worship to God their own way and that God would be pleased with them. But God wasn't pleased.

In all of these cases, although they thought that they were bringing worship to God, they weren't because their heart was far from God. Sure, they performed the actions, they did the deeds in which they thought they were worshipping God. But it wasn't true worship. And why wasn't it true worship? Because it wasn't worship that God had prescribed.

And in many ways there are churches who do the same thing today. They do things that they have prescribed as worship to God. But it's not worship at all. And I believe the greatest way that this happens in churches today is not by offerings of fruit, fruit offerings, or dancing around in a golden calf or offering strange fire to God, but it happens through tradition. It happens through tradition. Traditions that have been passed down from man, but were never prescribed by God.

And that's exactly what Jesus is confronting the Pharisees about, here in our passage this morning. The traditions of men have trumped the word of God. And by upholding these traditions, the people believe that they are worshipping God. These Pharisees think that they are offering true worship to God.

But really, they aren't, because they're doing what man is telling them to do instead of what God has told them to do. They put man's traditions above God's word and their worship and devotion is portrayed through their own traditions. In some external form of worship. It's been passed down from men. Instead of coming and being drawn out of the Word of God.

God is serious about our worship. He's serious about our worship of Him. And God tells us how He wants to be worshipped in His Word. He tells us in His Word. I know that many of you have come from so called churches like this. Many Catholic and Lutheran churches that are full of tradition that is far from true worship of God.

They have cancelled the Word of God by establishing their own traditions and calling it worship of God.

One commentator says the basic problem of humanity is not atheism, it is idolatry. And adding to God's Word is like taking away from it. When you add to the Word of God, you are taking away from the Word of God. And many churches have taken away from God's Word by adding their own traditions and calling it worship. Now, while not all tradition is bad. There are good traditions that we have. Not all tradition is bad as we'll talk about this morning. There are many tragedies that arise from tradition when it becomes the standard and when it trump's the Word of God.

Our worship of God must arise from what God tells us in His Word about how He is to be worshipped. Not from the creativity or the traditions of men. We can't create our own ways to worship God.

And sadly, there are churches that are filled with tons of creativity, creative ways to worship God...that are not prescribed in God's Word. And they call it true worship, and it's not. Because it's not how God says He wants to be worshipped. It's not how we are to worship God. So let's look at our passage this morning and we're going to see three ways in which the tradition of man and worship becomes tragic.

Three ways in which the tradition of man in worship becomes tragic.

1. Our first point is that tradition leads to fruitless rituals. Tradition leads to fruitless rituals.

Look at verse one with me. Mark chapter 7 verse 1. the Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around him, Jesus, when they had come from Jerusalem. *"And it's seen that some of his disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is unwashed."*

Now Mark at this point in Mark chapter 7, he breaks away chronologically. Last week we saw Jesus walking on water, the healing at Gennesaret there, and Mark now breaks away chronologically to tell us about this controversy that Jesus has with the Pharisees.

Now we haven't seen the Pharisees in a while. It's been a while since we've seen them. The last time we saw the Pharisees was all the way back in chapter 3 in verse 6, when they had gone away to conspire with the Herodians as to how they can kill Jesus. You want to know what the Pharisees had been up to since this point? They're conspiring how to kill Jesus. That's what they're after. They want Him dead.

But here they show up they meet Jesus. We don't know the exact location of this confrontation, but we know that they have come from Jerusalem. The Pharisees and the scribes come from Jerusalem. Most likely they're somewhere now in Galilee. We don't know the exact location, but they're somewhere in Galilee.

And why have they come? Why have they come from Jerusalem all the way up to Galilee? Because they want to see Jesus. Notice what it says there they gathered around Him. They want to see Him. And notice who else is there with the Pharisees? The scribes. The scribes are there with them.

Now, some of the scribes were Pharisees. As you study scribes and Pharisees, some of the scribes were Pharisees, but they were also two separate groups. Two separate groups, the Pharisees were a religious party, while the scribes had more of a professional vocation, but they worked very close together with one another. The scribes were the ones... their vocation, their job, was to give the interpretation and the application of the Mosaic Law. That's what their job was. That's what their duty was.

And they had the responsibility of guarding it. The scribes give the interpretation, the application, and they guard the Mosaic Law. One commentator says their interpretations formed the basis for the practice of the Pharisees. And so what the scribes did is they were the ones interpreting and applying it. But then the Pharisees were the ones who were then supposed to go and live it out. They were that religious party.

But Jesus condemned both of these groups for the way that they had mishandled the scriptures. They totally missed it. And their problem that day was not specifically with Jesus. Although it was indirectly. Notice who they had a problem with. Jesus' disciples. The problem was with Jesus' disciples because some of his disciples were eating their bread with impure hands. Now, how did the Pharisees know this?

How did the Pharisees know that Jesus' disciples are eating with impure hands? Because they're watching every move that they make, right? They're following Jesus, they're watching the disciples. They're watching the things that Jesus is doing and teaching, and what his disciples are doing. They're watching every move that Jesus makes. Sadly, they didn't learn anything from Jesus. But they watched

Him. They kept a close eye on Him because they wanted to catch Him in something wrong so that they could come and bring an accusation against Jesus in His disciples and they did just that.

They saw some of the disciples who hadn't washed their hands before they ate their bread. So they brought an accusation against Jesus' disciples, saying that they hadn't washed their hands. Now what was this washing of the hands all about? Why did they care so much about washing of the hands? Well, Mark breaks out in verses 3 & 4, and he tells us what this hand washing is all about. Look at what he says in verse three, he gives us a parenthetical in verse 3 just to tell us what this is all about. In verse 3:

“For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the traditions of the elders; 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.”

This washing here was a tradition that had been passed down for centuries in Judaism. It's been passed down as traditions of men and one of the traditions was that you had to wash your hands before you ate. Now, this wasn't “hey kids...you've just been playing outside and it's lunchtime. Go wash your hands.” Right? It's not one of those things or wash your hands before dinner because we're about to eat. That's not what's going on here that's not the tradition that's passed down. That's not what's happening it's not a washing of the hands before dinner time type of thing.

There was a specific way in which you had to wash your hands. There were specific things that were laid out by the Pharisees and the scribes in which the Jews had to uphold in which they had to wash their hands a specific way. And especially if you came home from the marketplace, if you were a Jew and you went out into the marketplace and you come home, you had to clean yourself. Not just your hands, but you wanted to clean your entire self. Why? Because as a Jew, when you're in the marketplace, you might run into who? A Gentile. And if you rubbed elbows with the Gentile. That means you are now what unclean.

Uh-Oh. You better wash up. They had to wash themselves and they took it even to an extreme of washing their pots and their pans, right? They come in the house from the marketplace and I might have touched that pot... better clean the whole thing wasn't just to get the food out like we do. It was that that pot or that pan might be unclean, because somehow there was Gentiles touching it in some way. A Gentile might have touched it and therefore it's become unclean.

And so they took it to this extreme of washing themselves, washing everything, just in case 'cause we didn't want anything to be unclean. And it became a tradition then that was passed down.

Now this tradition, this ritual tradition had been passed down through Rabbinical teachings. That is, it was all oral traditions. It was all oral teaching that was being passed down at this time. It did not come from the Word of God.

This wasn't something that the scribes were able to look up in the Mosaic law and, say, wash your hands before you eat or wash your pots and pans before you eat... because you may have touched a Gentile and be unclean.

But in Jesus' day, this was this was just oral teaching that had all been passed down. At this point, it hadn't even been written down yet.

But the rabbis they would take this oral teaching, and as it was passed down, they would continue to give their own interpretations of the Law of God, claiming that they were putting a fence around the Law of God. So here's what they would do. They would make up their own traditions to try and guard and protect the Law of God. That's what they claim. We're going to do all of this stuff because we want you to live in such a way in such obedience to God that you might not become defiled. And so we're going to add all of these stipulations, and add all of these regulations onto you, because look at what, we're going to protect the Law. We care about God and His Word.

They added all of these little stipulations in order to try and keep people away from breaking the law, but all they did was do what? They burden the people. They burden the Jews. They burden the people and it now had become about upholding the traditions of men rather than about upholding the Law of God. That's what the Jews focus now had become upon, traditions of men rather than upholding the Law of God, they had become fruitless rituals. Fruitless rituals.

And these Pharisees, and these scribes then bring an accusation against Jesus and His disciples, of Jesus and His disciples. Look what it says there. In verse 5 the Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus, why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders? But eat their bread with impure hands?

Now when these Pharisees and these scribes come and ask Jesus this, this question here. They're not wondering out of curiosity... "Why don't why don't your guys not wash their hands? We're just curious about this. We all we do it. We tell other Jews to do it. But why do you guys not have to wash their hands before they eat?" That's not what they're asking.

When they're asking this question they're outraged. "Why are your disciples not washing before eating!" They are bringing an accusation against Jesus and His disciples that they have done something wrong, that they are not living righteous lives.

And that's what the tradition of men leads to, does it not?

Tradition of men leads to self-righteous accusations. That's what these guys are doing. The scribes and the Pharisees are self-righteous. It's all about them and the things that they do and don't do. And that's what traditions of men lead to. You don't do it like me, therefore it's wrong. They don't hold to the same fruitless rituals.

And sadly, there are many churches that are filled with fruitless rituals. And people become self-righteous thinking you don't do it like us therefore you're wrong.

These guys they thought these Pharisees thought that they were righteous by the things they did and didn't do externally. By the things that they did or didn't do externally. Their rituals, but internally they were far from God. Internally they were self-righteous and they had no clue what true worship of God was. No clue.

One commentator puts it this way. The religious leader's outward appearance of piety was a lie. It was not accompanied by a lifestyle of true heart commitment to God. Look, when we take the traditions of men and put them on the same level or above God's Word all those traditions become are fruitless rituals. They're nothing. It's just an outward show of devotion to God. But there is no internal heart of worship for God and that's what it's become for these Pharisees and scribes.

2. And so not only do the traditions of men lead to fruitless rituals, but Secondly, it leads to fake worship. It leads to fake worship.

Look at verse 6.

And He said to them, “Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written:
‘THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS,
BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.
7 ‘BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME,
TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.’

Now notice how Jesus answers them. Notice how Jesus answers the scribes and the Pharisees. He doesn't come to them and say, well, you know because well there wasn't any water nearby or well, I mean to be a long track for us to go and get some water, or... He doesn't answer them according to their foolishness. How does He answer them? What does He use? The Word of God.

What does He do? He gets right to the heart of the matter. And what does He quote? He quotes Isaiah 29:13 in the Old Testament. He quotes Isaiah 29:13 that these guys, Pharisees and scribes should have known. They claim to know it, their master interpreters of the Law. They should know Isaiah 29:13.

What was their authority? What were these guys going to appeal to? Are you going to appeal to the oral traditions that have been passed down by the rabbis, or are you going to appeal to the Word of God? And that's exactly what Jesus does. He says, listen, I'm going to take you right to the authority. The Word of God. That's our authority. And that's what you guys should be standing up on. But sadly these guys instead of appealing to the Word of God, they appeal to the traditions of men.

And Jesus exposes these guys and shows how far away from God their heart really was. These guys were far from God. And notice what He calls them. Notice what He calls them.

He calls them hypocrites. You guys are a bunch of hypocrites. Now, notice Jesus never dealt with the crowds like this, right? How did Jesus deal with the crowds? Compassion. Compassion for them. Look at them, they're like sheep without a shepherd. I'm going to show compassion to them. They have a need and I'm going to feed them. I'm going to take care of them. That's how we handled the crowd.

But that's not how He dealt with these Pharisees. He called them hypocrites. Hypocrites. He was harsh with these guys, because these were the guys who were leading the people away from God by their self-righteous fruitless traditions. Now, this word, hypocrite here, means a play actor. That's what he's saying here. You guys are just a bunch of play actors. It carried the picture of a man assuming an identity and character different from what he really was. These were men who had masks on.

What you saw in the outside was nothing like what they were on the inside. These guys they professed to be followers of God, but their heart was far from God and Jesus called them out on it, and He says you guys are a bunch of hypocrites. You're a bunch of hypocrites. You're not followers of God, you are followers of men.

Their religion had become all about rituals. Their righteousness was all about rules. Their heart had become hardened to the commands of God, and they led other people to join them in their fake and futile worship of God.

Their worship meant nothing. It was all in vain, and it was all for no purpose because it didn't stem from the heart.

And Jesus brings an accusation against them, and He says that you honor God with your lips. You are the ones that Isaiah has prophesied about who honors God with your lips, but your heart is far away from Him. Sure, you say all the right things but your heart isn't in it.

What they had professed with their mouth was far from the reality of what was in their heart. They had become more concerned about their rituals than they did about their relationship with God.

They worship God in vain. They were just giving God lip service. That's all that they were doing. Giving God a bunch of lip service. Their worship was a complete waste of time because it showed nothing of true heart devotion to God. There was zero honor of God in their rituals.

And Jesus says, quoting Isaiah 29 that they're teaching the precepts of men as if they are the doctrines of God. It wasn't bad enough that they just went through the rituals of what they thought was worship. But they actually took their rituals and they taught it to others and put those other people under the burdens of their rituals, claiming that that was what God commanded.

Look, do you want to live a righteous and holy life? Then live according to our oral traditions. Then do this and don't do that. And it was all about the do's and the don'ts. Their worship was in vain. It was all in vain? It was self-righteous worship.

And Jesus then accuses them in verse eight. Look what He says in verse 8, *"neglecting the commandment of God, you hold to the tradition of men."* Their worship had stemmed from their tradition rather than from God's Word. Look, listen, listen believers. You can't worship God in a way that you think is right. You can't do it. God tells us in His Word how He wants to be worshipped. He tells us exactly how we are to worship Him in His Word. That's why we must know His Word. We can't create some form of worship in our mind and call it worship of God. We can't create our own imagination of what we think worship is and then call it worship. It doesn't work that way.

We've gotta worship God according to His Word. Sadly, there's a lot of worship like this in our churches today. People come up with all kinds of new ways that they think they can worship God. They've got plays now, and acting and movies going on, and rock and roll concerts, and all of this stuff that they call worship. That God says that's not true worship.

That's not what I've commanded in My Word and how I desire to be worshipped? And they come up with all of these forms of worship. And then you go to the opposite extreme of the liturgy that's been passed down from men to men to men, and you continue to pass it down. And all this liturgy just becomes about something to go and do and call it church, worship. Check the box off for the week went and did that. And yet it's far from worship.

Why? Because it doesn't stem from the heart.

And Secondly, because it doesn't come from God's Word.

But God has called us to worship Him. And He tells us how to worship Him in His Word. It didn't work for Cain. It didn't work for Nadab and Abihu.

And it won't work for churches today either. People show up to church to be entertained. We don't come to church to be entertained. We don't come to church just to check off a box for the week so that we can say we worshipped God this week.

People come in doors and they sit in chairs and pews and they just go through the motions because that's what we always do. We just go through the rituals. Because that's what we always do. And yet there's no heart devotion to God. It's all fake and futile and pointless, and there's no substance and no true worship of God because their heart is far from God.

Listen friend. Where is your heart when you come to worship God. Where is your heart at when you enter these doors on a Sunday morning to gather with brothers and sisters in Christ to give praise and glory, and honor, and worship to our God?

Do you show up just to check off a box? I hope not.

I hope you come with a heart that is devoted to God to give Him the praise and adoration and thanksgiving and glory that He deserves alone. Don't let Sundays become tradition and rituals and just going through the motions. God knows your heart and He wants your worship to be from your heart according to His Word.

Jesus says to the Samaritan woman, what did he say to the Samaritan woman? *"We worship God in"* what? *"spirit and in truth"*. In spirit and in truth. That is, we worship God inwardly in the spirit, with the proper heart attitude, and we worship in truth according to God's Word. As God has revealed it to us.

Don't come on Sunday morning, Sunday mornings and just go through some external motions and actions of what is so-called worship. Come on Sunday mornings to give praise and glory and adoration to God because He deserves it. Don't come with fake worship. Come with true worship. With a heart that's full of worship to our God.

3. So not only do the traditions of men lead to fruitless rituals and fake worship, but finally it leads to false love. It leads to false love.

Look at verse 9. *"He, Jesus was also saying to them you are experts at setting aside the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition."*

Now this is interesting. Here Jesus actually in this verse tells them something that they do well. He's giving them it's like a compliment to them. Here's something that you guys do really well. You guys are experts in this. The Greek word for experts there means to do something well or with excellence. And what Jesus is doing here is he's actually being sarcastic with these guys.

This is sarcasm here. But you guys do this...do this really, really well. You guys want to know what it is? You set aside the commandments of God so that you can keep your traditions.

Wow. How that must have hurt?

You do that really well. And they don't just do it once. But they continually do it day after day. They live their lives, thinking that they're pleasing God, thinking that they're showing some kind of devotion and some kind of love to God. But really, they're rejecting God, by putting their traditions above God's Word.

And then Jesus gives them an illustration of this. In verses 10 through 13, He gives them an illustration of how they uphold the traditions of men above God's Word. Look what He says in verse 10.

"For Moses said, honor your father and your mother, and he who speaks evil of father or mother, is to be put to death".

Jesus here goes right to the Law and He gives them the 5th commandment. The 5th commandment honor your father and your mother. And then He goes on to quote Exodus 21 in verse 17, and He says if you speak evil of your father or your mother, you are to be put to what? Death.

How are you doing with honoring your father and your mother?

Jesus was serious about it. God is serious about showing honor to our father and our mother. And any child who violates the 5th commandment, God says is to be put to death. Pretty serious. God is serious about His Word. And the Pharisees are to take God's Word serious too, but instead they've allowed children to dishonor their parents. They've allowed children to disobey God's Word and to dishonor their parents.

How did they allow this? Look at what He says in verse 11, but you say if a man says to his father, his mother, whatever I have that would help you as Corban. That is to say, given to God, you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother.

Now what is? What does Jesus mean here? This word, Corban? When He uses this word Corban here? Well, Mark actually gives us an explanation of it here, right? He says that it means "given to God" Corban means to be given to God or literally giving an offering to God. That's what Corban means.

And what had been passed down was a tradition that if someone declared their possessions or their goods, that they had their money or their goods as Corban, then all that they had was devoted to God. That was a tradition that was passed down. All you had to do is say, my stuff is Corban.

And all of it now is devoted to God. And so if an adult child had money or goods that he was going to use to take care of his father or his mother. If at anytime he decided that he didn't want to take care of his father or mother anymore, all he had to do was say my stuff is Corban. That was it. My goods are Corban. My money is Corban all that I have, it's Corban...it's God's, and from that moment on, everything that that child had was given to God, and therefore it couldn't be used for his father or his mother.

And so while on the outside that child looked like a devoted follower of God, look all that I have is Corban. It's all given over to God. It's all an offering to God. What's going on in the inside? Disobedience to God's Word. Because they don't desire to take care of their father or their mother. They look good on the outside. They look like a devoted follower of God. They look like one who loved God and is giving everything over to God, but it was false love.

It wasn't true love. In reality, this child didn't love God. This child hated God, because he wasn't caring for his parents. As God said, he's to do... to honor your father and your mother. After all, the things that your father and your mother have done for you and raising you as a child. You are to show them honor.

Oh, but God? We love you so much we're giving it all over to you. It's not love. It's not love.

One commentator says the hypocritical system promoted by the Pharisees and the scribes allowed people to maintain an external veneer of dedication to God while simultaneously turning their backs on their parents.

That's what traditions had become. And the Pharisees allowed it. And when a child would pronounce this stuff as Corban since it's now dedicated over to God, who are the ones that will benefit from this? The Pharisees and the scribes. Why? Because they're the ones that take care of the temple. They're the ones who are doing God's business. Yeah, pronounce it Corban. And then they get the benefit of it.

They taught this. As an oral tradition. Out of self-love.

Now here's the thing. When something was pronounced, Corban, a son could still hang on to his possessions. He didn't have to just go and take all that he had and give it to the temple at that point.

But if a son ever came back at some point and said that he didn't want his stuff to be Corban anymore because he wanted to provide for his father and his mother, the Pharisees would not allow that. Because they would say to them well, you made a vow. Look, you made a vow to God. You've got to keep your vow right. Oh, you want to show love and honor to your parents? Well remember the vow. Remember when you pronounce Corban. And instead of encouraging the son to honor his father and his mother just as God's Word had said, they would place this tradition, this vow over them, and they would tell them you can't rescind this now. You made you made a vow. You made a vow to God.

God, you can't resend it now and that's why Jesus says in verse 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother, even if he wants to take back the Corban. Even if he wants to say I want to take all my stuff and give it over so that I can love and care for an honor my father and my mother, Jesus says you don't even permit them to do that.

Jesus was disgusted with this tradition. Disgusted with the teachings of men. With the traditions of men. Because it showed a false love for God. And it allowed for children not to show love towards their parents.

One commentator says by observing the traditions of men, they neglect the greater Law of love. That's what they have done by upholding the traditions of men they've neglected the greater law of love, they had put the traditions of men above the Word of God.

And this wasn't their only example. Look at what Jesus says in verse 13 and you do many things such as that. This is just one example of the many ways that you have put the traditions of men above the Word of God. And he's disgusted with it. It's false worship. It's fake worship. It's false love. They thought that they were showing love and devotion to God, but their hearts were far from God.

And the sad thing is that they led other people to do the same thing as they laid their traditions down as burdens on the people.

In closing, there are two simple questions that we have to ask regarding worship.

The first one is this.

1. Is our worship what God has prescribed in His Word? Is our worship what God has prescribed in His Word?

There's a book out by Sinclair Ferguson that talks about this very thing that God has prescribed in His Word. How He is to be worshipped.

2. The second question is this. Does our worship come from the heart or is it merely external rituals? Does our worship come from the heart or is it merely external rituals?

Listen church. Don't play church. Don't play church. God is not pleased with rituals. Fruitless rituals that lack a heart of worship for Him. Don't play church, don't come and just go through the motions without giving your heart to God and true love and true worship and true devotion to Him.

Don't let worship become about rituals in your own life. We must worship God from the heart and true love and true devotion to Him. And we have to do it according to the way that He has commanded us to do it in His Word. Because listen, His Word is our authority, not the traditions of men. How is your heart? Where is your worship? Do you come on Sundays to give your heart and worship to God? Don't go through the motions. Come and give Him the praise and glory and adoration that He alone deserves.

Let's pray. Father, What an amazing passage. What an amazing text that hit home for all of us. It's just so easy for us to go through the rituals to look at traditions and put them on the same level as your Word. Father, I pray that we would never do that. Pray that You would guard us from that and help us not to be deceived. But that we would stand upon Your Word as what it is, it's truth. And in Your Word you have prescribed how we are to worship You.

Father, I pray for anyone here this morning who does not have a heart of devotion to You because they don't know You. Father, I pray that You would call them and draw them to Yourself. I pray that You would make it clear through Your Word where their heart is at. They don't have true devotion to You because they're not Your child because they haven't come to You in repentance and faith. And Father, I pray that You would draw them to You that they would come to You, turning from their sins, and putting faith in You alone. Father I pray that You would work on all of our hearts and help us to remember this as we come to worship You Sunday after Sunday. We wouldn't show up because of some tradition. But we show up to give true heart worship, and devotion to You that You alone deserve. We pray all of this in the name of Christ. Amen.