

JESUS CONFRONTS AND CONDEMNS FALSE RELIGION

LESSONS FROM

Matt 15:1-9

God's teaching concerning "honoring" father and mother is set forth both *positively* and *negatively* in the Scriptures.

God's teaching concerning "honoring" father and mother is set forth *positively* in:

- a. Ex 20:12 – "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you."
- b. Lev 19:1-3 – "And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, 2 'Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: "You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy. 3 Every one of you shall **revere** his mother and his father, and keep My Sabbaths: I am the LORD your God.'"
- c. Eph 6:2-3 – "**Honor** your father and mother,' which is the first commandment with promise: 3 that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

God's teaching concerning "honoring" father and mother is set forth *negatively* in:

- a. Ex 21:14-15 – "But if a man acts with premeditation against his neighbor, to kill him by treachery, you shall take him from My altar, that he may die. 15 **And** he who **strikes** his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."
 - ▶ Notice: God said the son who strikes his father or mother is deserving of the same penalty as the *murderer*: death.
- b. Lev 20:8-10 – "And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the LORD who sanctifies you. 9 For everyone who **curse**s his father or his mother shall surely be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother. His blood shall be upon him. 10 The man who commits adultery with another man's wife, he who commits adultery with his neighbor's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress, shall surely be put to death."
 - ▶ Notice: God said the son who curses his father or mother is deserving of the same penalty as the *adulterer*: death.
- c. Deut 27:14-16 – "And the Levites shall speak with a loud voice and say to all the men of Israel: 15 'Cursed is the one who makes a carved or molded image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen!'" 16 'Cursed is the one who **treats** his father or his mother **with contempt**.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'"
 - ▶ (NASB, NIV, NRSV: "Cursed is he who **dishonors** his father or mother.")
 - ▶ Notice: God said the son who treats his father or mother with contempt is cursed by God – as is the one who worships false gods.
- d. Prov 20:20 – "Whoever **curse**s his father or his mother, His lamp will be put out in deep darkness."
- e. Prov 30:17 – "The eye that **mocks** his father, And **scorns obedience** to his mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it."

It is very clear from these readings that "honoring" father and mother is a matter of . . .

- a. your *attitude* toward your father and mother: what you *think* of them . . . how you *feel* about them . . . how you *speak* to your father and mother . . . and how you *speak about* them to others
- b. how you *respond* to the authority of your father and mother . . . and how you *respond* to their teaching.

But "honoring" your father and mother is also a matter of **what you do for them**:

- a. Mk 7:10-13 -- "For Moses said, '**Honor** your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 11 But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"--' (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him **do anything for** his father or his mother, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And **many such things you do**."
- b. And if you do not "honor" your father and mother by **doing for them** according to their needs, you will be condemned by God . . . no matter how religious you may otherwise *appear* to be.
- c. 1Tim 5:4 – "But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them **first** learn to **show piety at home** and to **repay their parents**; for this is good and acceptable before God."
- d. 1Tim 5:8 – "But if anyone does not **provide** for his own, and especially for those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."

Now, having seen how clearly the Bible sets forth God's will concerning children honoring their parents . . . and having been reminded by these Bible readings of just how adamant God is about children honoring their parents . . . I want to take you to a place in the New Testament where Jesus used this teaching to *expose* and *condemn* the **hypocrisy** of the Jewish religious leaders of His day and the **falsity** of their man-made religion.

Read **Matt 15:1-9**

THE CONFRONTATION

The Jewish religious leaders had supplemented the Law of Moses with their own human traditions (here called, "the tradition of the elders").

- a. Where did these traditions come from?
 - ▶ They were handed down from the teachers of previous generations.
 - ▶ These traditions were originally the "oral law" which (according to the rabbis) Moses gave to the elders of Israel, and they passed down to the nation.
 - ▶ This oral law was ultimately written down and became the Mishnah – and, of course, each succeeding generation added to these traditions of the elders.
- b. In their minds, the traditions of the elders had actually become more important and more authoritative than the original Law of Moses.
- c. They tried to bind these traditions upon all Jews.

Remember: when God gave the Law through Moses, He left no option open to the Jews to add their own requirements to His Law – in fact, he specifically prohibited them from adding to His Law.

- a. Deut 4:2 -- "**You shall not add** to the word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
- b. Deut 12:32 -- "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; **you shall not add** to it nor take away from it.
- c. Prov 30:5-6 – "Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him. **6 Do not add to His words**, Lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar."

THE MAIN LESSON

False religion is as bad or worse than no religion: false religion is "vain" ("useless") and it makes our worship "vain" (useless).

- a. Most people seem to think just about any religion will do – but there is such a thing as "vain" worship.
 - ▶ Our worship can be made vain because of WHAT WE TEACH
 - Vs7-9 – "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. 9 And in **vain** they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."
 - ▶ Our worship can be made vain because of A LOOSE TONGUE
 - Jas 1:26 – "If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is **useless**."
 - ▶ Our worship can be made vain because of NOT HAVING SINCERE LOVE FOR OTHERS
 - 1Cor 13:1-3 – "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, **it profits me nothing**."
 - ▶ Our worship can be made vain because of AN ATTITUDE OF DISINTEREST IN WORSHIP AND SERVICE TO GOD
 - Mal 1:7-13 – "You offer defiled food on My altar, But you say, 'In what way have we defiled You?' By saying, 'The table of the LORD is contemptible.' 8 And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice, Is it not evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, Is it not evil? Offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts. 9 "But now entreat God's favor, That He may be gracious to us. While this is being done by your hands, Will He accept you favorably?" Says the LORD of hosts. 10 "Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in **vain**? I have no pleasure in you," Says the LORD of hosts, "Nor will I accept an offering from your hands. 11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its

going down, My name shall be great among the Gentiles; In every place incense shall be offered to My name, And a pure offering; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts. 12 "But you profane it, In that you say, "The table of the LORD is defiled; And its fruit, its food, is contemptible.' 13 You also say, "Oh, what a weariness!" And you sneer at it," Says the LORD of hosts. "And you bring the stolen, the lame, and the sick; Thus you bring an offering! Should I accept this from your hand?" Says the LORD.

OTHER LESSONS

The enemies of truth are often religious leaders who proclaim and promote doctrines of human origin and distort/pervert the doctrines of divine origin.

- a. It is often a head-on conflict between "the Giver of the law" and "the teachers of the law."
- b. We must put religious teachers to the test . . . we must carefully examine everything that is taught in the light of God's word.
 - ▶ 1Thess 5:21 – "Test all things; hold fast what is good."
 - ▶ Ac 17:11 – "These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so."
 - ▶ 1Jn 4:1 – "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world."
 - ▶ Rev 2:2 – "I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars;"
 - ▶ 2Pet 2:1-3 – "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. 2 And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. 3 By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."
 - ▶ Matt 15:1 (NKJV) – "Then the **scribes** and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,"
 - NIV – "Then some Pharisees and **teachers of the law** came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked,"
 - + Identified in these verses as:
 - Hypocrites – vs7
 - Honoring human traditions and dishonoring divine commandments -- vs3,6
 - Blind guides – vs14
 - + Example: Matt 23:15 -- "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves."
 - + Example: Matt 23:33 -- "Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"
 - ▶ Remember: "For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light" (2Cor 11:14)

We need to pay attention to how Jesus dealt with the Pharisees and false "teachers of the law"

- a. He shrewdly used questions *to teach* the honest seekers and *to silence* the false teachers.
 - ▶ Example: Vs3 – "He answered and said to them, '**Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition?**'"
 - ▶ Example: Lk 10:25-37 – "And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" 26 He said to him, "**What is written in the law?** What is your reading of it?" 27 So he answered and said, ""You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and "your neighbor as yourself."" 28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live." 29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" 30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On

the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 **So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?"** 37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

- ▶ Example: Lk 20:21-26 – "Then they asked Him, saying, "Teacher, we know that You say and teach rightly, and You do not show personal favoritism, but teach the way of God in truth: 22 Is it lawful for us to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" 23 But He perceived their craftiness, and said to them, "**Why do you test Me?** 24 Show Me a denarius. **Whose image and inscription does it have?**" They answered and said, "Caesar's." 25 And He said to them, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." 26 But they could not catch Him in His words in the presence of the people. And they marveled at His answer and kept silent."
 - ▶ Example: Matt 19:16-17 – "Now behold, one came and said to Him, 'Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?' 17 So He said to him, '**Why do you call Me good?** No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.'"
 - ▶ Example: Matt 21:23-25 – "Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" 24 But Jesus answered and said to them, "**I also will ask you one thing**, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: 25 **The baptism of John--where was it from? From heaven or from men?**" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?'"
 - ▶ Example: Matt 22:41-45 – "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, 42 saying, "**What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?**" They said to Him, "The Son of David." 43 He said to them, "**How then does David in the Spirit call Him 'Lord,'** saying: 44 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool!'"? 45 **If David then calls Him 'Lord,' how is He his Son?**" 46 And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore."
- b. Jesus also dealt with the Pharisees and "teachers of the law" by using what I'll call "CONFRONTATIONAL CONTRAST" (God said" . . . "But you say")
- ▶ vs4-6 – "**For God commanded**, saying, "Honor your father and your mother'; and, "He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' 5 **But you say**, "Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"—6 then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition.
 - ▶ We would do well to make wise use of this "tactic"
 - **God said:** "He who believes and is baptized shall be saved" (Mk 16:16)
 - + **But you say:** "He who believes and is not baptized shall be saved" – or -- "He who believes and is saved should be baptized."
 - **God said:** "baptism doth also now save us" (KJV)
 - + **But you say:** "baptism does not also now save us"
 - **God said:** "He takes away the first (covenant) that He may establish the second (covenant)" (Heb 10:9)
 - + **But you say:** "He keeps a part of the first (covenant) and adds the second (covenant) to it."
 - **The Lord said:** "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name" (Heb 13:15)
 - + **But you say:** "let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the sound of mechanical instruments of music"
 - **The Lord said:** "speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Eph 5:19)
 - + **But you say:** "speaking to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody on mechanical instruments of music"
 - **God said:** a group of qualified (Tit 1:5-9; 1Tim 3:1-7) elders are to oversee and pastor the local congregation (Ac 20:17, 28 – "From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the **elders** of the church. Therefore take heed to **yourselves** and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers**, to **shepherd** (pastor) the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.")
 - + **But you say:** use any form of church government and appoint any officers with whatever qualifications you choose

We must beware of worship that comes from the lips only, and not from the heart.

- a. God wants us to give Him our *hearts* , and not our *lip service*.
 - ▶ We must *believe* in our hearts (Rom 10:9-10)
 - ▶ We must *take God's word* into our hearts
 - Deut 6:6 – “And these words which I command you today shall be **in your heart**. You shall teach them diligently to your children . . .”
 - Deut 30:14 – “But the word is very near you, in your mouth and **in your heart** , that you may do it.”
 - Psa 119:11 – “Your word I have hidden **in my heart** that I might not sin against You.”)
 - ▶ *The Lord Jesus* must dwell in our hearts
 - Eph 3:17 – “that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, 17 that Christ may dwell **in your hearts** through faith; . . .”
 - 1Pet 3:15 – “But sanctify the Lord God **in your hearts**, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is **in** you, with meekness and fear;)
 - We must *take our brethren* into our hearts
Php 1:7 – “just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you **in my heart**, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.”
 - We must *obey* from our hearts
 - + Rom 6:17-18
 - + Psa 11(:34 – “Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; Indeed, I shall observe it with my **whole heart**.”)
 - We must *love* from our hearts (Matt 22:37)
 - We must *sing* from our hearts
 - + Psa 138:1 – “I will praise You with my **whole heart**; Before the gods I will sing praises to You.”
 - + Col 3:16
 - + Eph 5:18-19
 - Our *prayers* must arise from our hearts
 - + Psa 119:145 – “I cry out with my **whole heart**; Hear me, O LORD! I will keep Your statutes.”
 - + Psa 119:58 – “I entreated Your favor with my **whole heart** ; Be merciful to me according to Your word.”)
 - We must *give* from our hearts
 - + 2Cor 9:7 – “So let each one give as he purposes **in his heart**, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver.”)

“Honoring” our heavenly Father involves basically the same things as “honoring” our earthly fathers.

- a. It is very clear from these readings that “honoring” father and mother is a matter of:
 - ▶ your attitude toward your father and mother -- what you *think* of them . . . how you *feel* about them
 - ▶ how you speak *to* your father and mother, and how you speak *about* them to others
 - ▶ how you respond to the authority of your father and mother, and how you respond to their teaching. and it is a matter of **what you do for Him**:
- b. Of course, we are to “honor” God in ways that go far beyond how we “honor” our parents;
 - ▶ We are to honor God by worshiping Him.
 - ▶ We are to honor God by obeying His every command.

We need to understand that not all traditions are bad.

- a. Human traditions that are bound upon others . . . and human traditions that cause people to set aside divine commands and divinely appointed traditions . . . and human traditions that add unauthorized activities to the work and worship of the church are BAD.
- b. But some traditions are of Divine origin, and they must be honored.
 - ▶ 1Cor 11:2 – “Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the **traditions** just as I delivered them to you.
 - ▶ 2Thess 2:15 – “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the **traditions** which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.”
 - ▶ 2Thess 3:6 – “But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the **tradition** which he received from us”
- c. And some human traditions (ex.: assembling on Sunday evening and Wednesday evening,

and having gospel meetings well serve Divine commands.

There are other lessons that we will not have time to give consideration to, but I want to mention them:

- a. LESSON; We must beware of any religious system that gives an excuse to sin and disobey God's word.
- b. LESSON: If we major on the inner man, the outer man will be what God wants it to be. True holiness comes from within.
- c. LESSON: It is difficult to break free from tradition. There is something in us that wants to hold to the past and make no changes. Even Peter had to learn his lesson twice!
- d. LESSON: We dare not limit Christ to any one nation or people. The gospel came "to the Jew first" (Rom 1:16), but today is for all men in all nations: "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom 10:13).

CONCLUSION

I want to bring this sermon to a conclusion by quoting 3 passages of Scripture that I believe well summarize all I've said in this sermon:

- a. "**Beware** lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the **tradition of men**, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ" (Col 2:8).
- b. ". . . stand fast and hold the **traditions which you were taught** (by the Lord and His apostles, bw), **whether by word or our epistle**" (2Thess 2:15).
- c. "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in **spirt and truth**" (Jn 4:24)