

Vain Worship

Linville Dunaway, Corinth Christian Church

Mark 7:6-9, "He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition."

Jesus was speaking to those who thought that they were the ones who were pleasing to God. Evidently they figured that Jesus was a false teacher because he didn't do like they did. In this case, Jesus, the Son of God, was rejected by those who were supposed to worship and follow the Word of God. To them, their traditions carried more force than did the commands of God. The Lord was not pleased with them, no matter how pleased they were with themselves.

How can anyone claim to believe God, walk with him, and do his will, and at the same time, mock, change, and leave out God's commands? You might wonder if such a thing were possible. Bad as it is to think on, it is not only possible, but it happens everyday. People follow the doctrines of man, make light of the commands of God, and claim to walk in a way pleasing to God. Sounds like the Pharisees that we read of in the Bible doesn't it? The modern day Pharisee is doing the same as they did when Jesus walked the earth.

Why do we have so many dominations, and churches, today? When you visit different churches you find that there are empty pews, so it is easy to see that it is not because of overcrowding. Some are there simply because some wanted to have their own way and started another congregation so they could control it. Pride plays a part in many of these situations and we know what the Lord thinks of our fleshly pride.

Denominations came about the same way; people differed over the doctrines of God. Some left parts out, and some added their traditions and opinions according to what they liked. As believers we should be most concerned with what God likes. Who is leading in things such as

this? I can guarantee this, it is not the Holy Spirit. The Lord is not divided, and the scriptures show plainly that the church is not to be divided either. If Paul, or any of the early church, could come into a modern congregation today, what would they think? Would they be impressed with the fancy building, the choir robes, and the elaborate ceremonies, that are called worship. Would the fine suit worn by the preacher, and his education impress them? How many "amens" would they give for the message preached? I wonder what the Lord thinks about the services that are so formal; everything is timed, leaving little room for the working of the Spirit.

Little church, or big church, if we do not worship in spirit and in truth, it is a vain service. All through the Bible we can see that cold, dead, formal services were not acceptable to the Lord. Even in the book of Revelation, chapter three, the church at Sardis was told that it had a name that it lived, but was dead. They were told to remember what they had heard (the gospel), and to repent. If we are not doing God's Will, we need to do the same, repent and obey God's Word. Any other way is vain worship.

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