

RUSSELL SANDERS
10-9-2021
MATTHEW 15:1-20
LESSON 2

The Jew's religious leaders had just questioned why Jesus' disciples "sinned" (transgressed) against the tradition of ceremonial handwashing before eating. Instead of responding to their accusation, Jesus turned it into an accusation against their hypocrisy.

He said to them in verses 3-6, ***"Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?"*** He cited the fifth of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:12) which says, ***"Honor thy father and thy mother"*** and Exodus 21:17 that says, ***"and he that curseth (dishonors) his father or his mother shall surely be put to death."***

The Pharisees were accusing Jesus and his band of breaking the tradition made by man, not by God. Jesus accused them of breaking the commandment given by God, not from man. That was a far more serious charge that proved their hypocrisy.

The Pharisee's tradition (likely from the Talmud) as said in verses 5-6, ***"Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother 'It is a gift, by whatsoever their mightest be profited by me' and honor not his father or his mother, he shall be free."*** This KJV rendering does not clarify the practice very well. The NASB gives it more clearly, and parallels the Amplified Version which says, ***"If anyone says to his father or mother 'whatever (money or resource that) I have that would help you is (already dedicated and) given to God,' he is not to honor his father or his mother (by helping them with their need.) so by this you have invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition."***

KJV verse 6 adds ***"he shall be free"*** despite his disobedience to God's word. Free from what? Free from the death sentence mandated in Exodus 21:17. There was no government assistance for the elderly who are in need like we have today. Their adult children were obligated to see that their elderly parents' basic needs were met.

The religious Scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees had created a tradition which relieved them of this biblical responsibility to honor their parents with basic sustenance. Their tradition exonerated them making them blameless. Their excuse was everything they had was already given to God (the synagogue, church, or in alms), therefore we have nothing left with which to help you. You are on your own. Good luck.

Jesus admonishes them that their manmade (Talmud) tradition in effect cancels out God's commandments. He called them in verse 7 hypocrites. Today, many churches have traditions not found in the Bible. Some are even contrary to the Bible. Some of those traditions arose in the last couple hundred years and some of the most egregious ones go back to the religious codification of Roman Catholic practices of the 300's A.D. Man's ideas should never supersede what God's written word says.