

MARKET STREET



"And this is the message we have received of Him, and declare unto you..." (1 John 1:5)

MESSENGER

Market Street church of Christ

514 West Market Street
P.O. Box 388
Athens, Alabama 35612
Phone (256) 232-1525

Schedule of Services

Sunday

Bible Classes 9:45 a.m.
Morning Worship 10:30 a.m.
Evening Worship 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday

Bible Classes 7:00 p.m.

Elders

Albert Bowers (256) 233-4847
Jerry McGlocklin (256) 232-7620
Kenneth Smith (256) 233-2050
Bonnie Sutton (256) 232-2081

Deacons

Marty R. Adams (256) 233-5147
Rusty Brand (256) 233-7343
Joel Hamm (256) 230-6223
Stuart Wilson (256) 233-6291

Evangelists

David A. Cox (256) 233-8910
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Warren Glass (256) 497-3138

Visit Us On The Web

MarketStreet-church.com

MARKET STREET MESSENGER

is published in the interest of New Testament Christianity and to enhance the work of the Market Street church.

David A. Cox, Editor

Volume II

August 15, 2010

No. 33

The Concept of Tradition

Jim Ward

Several passages highlight the tension that existed in the concept of tradition in Bible times and which continues until now. Two of them are 1 Corinthians 11:2 and Colossians 2:8.

"Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you" (1 Corinthians 11:2; cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:15).

"See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human traditions, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ" (Colossians 2:8; cf. Matthew 15:3,6).

Clearly, the former speaks favorably of tradition and the latter unfavorably.

To understand this topic better, let's begin by thinking about the word *tradition*. It has a neutral significance, neither good nor bad. It means "handed down" and in Scripture it usually refers to "a teaching or practice which has been handed down from generation to generation." The first and most obvious question to consider is the source of the tradition. From whom was it "handed down," God or man? The New Testament speaks in a pejorative sense of the "tradition of the elders" (Matthew 15:2), the "tradition of men" (Mark 7:8), and the "traditions of my fathers" (Galatians 1:14).

So, can we conclude, then, that traditions from God are good, and traditions from men are bad? No, things are not quite that simple. In fact, in my judgment, it would be impossible to conduct the work of God without some human input. To put that another way, the making of human traditions is absolutely necessary.

For example, God has given us very few instructions about conducting church meetings. He has told us **what** to do: take the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, give of our means on the first day of the week, pray, sing, and study the Bible.

However, He has told us next to nothing about **how** we do these things together. Must they come in a certain order? If so, what should it be? Granted we must assemble on the first day of the week, but may we assemble at times other than the first day of the week? Must we meet indoors or outdoors? May we borrow, rent, or buy a meeting place? Must a period of time together begin and end with a prayer? How many songs? Can we conclude with a song? Would it be acceptable to put our contributions in a box located at some convenient place in the building, rather than passing a plate or basket? Can a preacher's sermon be interactive; could he pause at various points and ask if there are any questions? True, we must pray through Jesus, but must a phrase such as "in the name of Jesus" be appended to every prayer? Instead of having our pews in a row, could we put them facing each other, with, say, half on one side of the auditorium and half on the other, with the preacher standing in the middle? Can we make announcements during these assemblies? Must they come either before an "opening" prayer or after a "closing" prayer? Could we ever announce anything of a social nature?

Could we devote a Sunday service to the Lord's Supper, with all prayers, songs, and teaching focused on that event? Could we meet to focus on singing, praying, or studying? Midweek services were once primarily devoted to prayer and even called "prayer meetings." Was that acceptable? Was it acceptable to change to something else?

As you can see, the questions are endless. And God didn't give us the answers to these and countless others. He does require us to meet on the first day of the week. He established the principle of decency and order in our assemblies (1 Corinthians 14:40). He forbids "a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man" (1 Timothy 2:12). But beyond these things, God has specified little else about our assemblies. To make a practical observation, we can change most things about how we conduct our meetings, since we are the ones who arranged them.

All of this leaves us mainly to our own judgment, and makes it impossible, as I said earlier, to avoid human traditions. So getting a handle on tradition is not as simple as determining whether they come from God or man. What other Bible teaching, then, can help us in understanding the place of tradition in our spiritual

lives? If the making of human traditions is necessary, can they ever become wrong? If so, when? A look at Matthew 15 and Mark 7 will be particularly helpful in answering this question.

A human tradition becomes sinful when it breaks a command of God.

Jesus asked the Pharisees and scribes, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition" (Matthew 15:3)? He had reference to their tradition of corban. In this practice, the Jews permitted the dishonoring of parents (in violation of Exodus 20:12) by neglecting them in time of need. This was done by telling them, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corban (that is, given to God)" (Mark 7:11). Giving to God was no excuse to neglect one's parents (it still isn't), and to do so is to disobey God.

It seems to me that we are not as prone to this kind of error as we are to the next.

A human tradition becomes sinful when we make it as binding as a precept of God.

"Now, when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they wash. And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' (Mark 7:1-5).

I suppose that it was as okay then as it is now to wash one's hands as a matter of good hygiene (mothers demand it whether God does or not). But it was sinful to bind it as a law of God, and then judge others as unfit servants if they did not do it.

One other danger associated with tradition bears mentioning. That is **contempt** for each other among Christians. I believe this is the sin that Jesus condemns in the Sermon on the Mount.

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders

will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire" (Matthew 5:21-22).

We do this - or at least come close to it - when we speak scornfully of each as *traditionalists or tradition breakers*. It is right to study together and to try to correct errors we see in each other. It is **not right** to be full of contempt for each other. Contempt is only a step away from hatred.

Most of our traditions - invitation songs, gospel meetings, ending assemblies with a prayer etc. - are good things. It's not likely that we are going to abandon them in wholesale fashion. But we made them, and we can change them. Let's remember that. Above all, let's treat each other with respect; we are all children of God.

-via *Lost River Bulletin*; Bowling Green, Kentucky.



Gospel Meeting

September 12-16, 2010

(Sunday through Thursday)

Schedule of Services

Sunday 9:30 a.m.; 10:45 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.
Monday through Thursday- 7:00 p.m.

Bill Hall, Speaking

Market Street church of Christ
514 West Market Street
Athens, Alabama

The Power of Prayer

Mike Wilson

Do you believe prayer changes things? In Luke 18:1-8, Jesus tells a parable about a widow who badgers a judge into giving her legal protection. Even though the judge is decidedly lacking in spiritual qualities, he acquiesces to her demand, so she won't "wear me out."

Likewise, Jesus says, we should be persistent in prayer to the One who has impeccable spiritual excellence: "Will not God bring about justice for His elect who cry to Him day and night, and will He delay long over them? I tell you that He will bring justice for them quickly. However, when the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7-8).

When we go to God, we should "ask in faith, without any doubting" (James 1:5). God gives wisdom to all "generously and without reproach." Moreover, He is "able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us (Ephesians 3:20). Consequently, "the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much" (James 5:16).

Jesus teaches, "Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and cast into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says is going to happen, it will be granted him.

Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you" (Mark 11:22-24).

Ultimately, the power resides in God, not in the act of verbalizing a prayer per se. The Lord of the universe may not answer our prayers exactly the way we have in mind, but, then again, He is not a genie out of a bottle who says, "Your wish is my command."

On the other hand, when we lift up our thoughts in absolute confidence in Him, He will never let us down.

-via *Focus Magazine*; Vol. 6 No. 1

Remember Our Study Periods

Sunday Mornings at 9:45 a.m.

Wednesday Evenings at 7:00 p.m.

News & Notes

THE SICK:

In The Hospital

Merle Turner, Athens Limestone, grandmother of Mutt & Frances Bowers' grandchildren

Scott Adams; Cancer Center of America – Chicago

At Home:

Janet Berryhill	David Gardner
Robert Beasley	Mot Beasley
Mary Ruth Gardner	Lola Colwell
Bobbie Adcock	Emma Clark
Jim Currier	Una King Currier
Molly Weeks	Jeff Mitchell
Jeff Waddell	Randy Graviett
Paul Adcock	Mark Hargrove
Bernice Martin	

Athens Convalescent Center:

Betty Bates, rm. 17 Pauline Lovell, rm. 78

Limestone Health Facility:

Essie Belle Bates, rm. 118 Rosella Pugh, rm. 74

J.D. Clanton, rm. 11E Mary Smith, rm. 85

Limestone Manor:

Albert & Mary Norton, rm. 96

Limestone Lodge:

Ruth Owens, rm. 12W

Shut-In:

Sarah Halbrook, Glade Retirement, Memphis, Tenn.

Reba Adams, at home

Polly Davis, Riverside Home South, Decatur, rm. 74

NURSING HOME SINGING: Remember the singing at the Athens Convalescent on Tuesday at 5:30 p.m.

NURSERIES AVAILABLE: There are two nurseries available for those who will need them. One is in the west wing and the other in the east wing.

CHILDREN'S BIBLE DRILL: Remember the Children's Bible drill this afternoon at 4:30. I hope that all of our children will be able to be present.

SYMPATHY: We want to express our deepest sympathy to the family of John Brent Brannon. He was the husband of Katina Brannon, granddaughter of Freddie Elmore.

HIGH SCHOOL/COLLEGE STUDY: The fourth and final study in the series of High School/College Age studies will be will Saturday evening, August 21st, at 6:30 p.m. We will be looking at our *Relationship To Our Job*. If you know of some people in these age groups, please invite them to join us.

Men Privileged To Serve:

Sunday, August 15th:

Morning Worship

Announcements	Joel Hamm
Song Leader	Tommy Burns
Prayer	Landon Adams
Preaching	David Cox
Lord's Supper	
Presiding	Stuart Wilson
Assisting	Larry Mitchell
Serving	Hunter Cox..... Russ Wulfekuhl
.....	Nathaniel Adams... Danny Johnson
Closing Prayer	Wayne Vaughn

Evening Worship

Announcements	Joel Hamm
Song Leader	Tommy Burns
Prayer	Jerry McGlocklin
Preaching	Rusty Brand
Lord's Supper	Larry Mitchell
Closing Prayer	Marty Adams

Other Assignments for Sunday, August 15th:

Usher	Dwaine Allfrey
Work Sound System	Marty Adams

Wednesday, August 18th:

Song Leader	Jerry McGlocklin
Bible Reading	(Isaiah 1:12-20)
.....	Will Chumbley
Prayer	Wayne Vaughn
Invitation	David Cox
Closing Prayer	Albert Bowers

Sunday, August 22nd:

Morning Worship

Announcements	Stuart Wilson
Song Leader	Joel Hamm
Prayer	Larry Mitchell
Preaching	Warren Glass
Lord's Supper	
Presiding	Jerry McGlocklin
Assisting	Marty Adams
Serving	Tyler Cox..... Ronnie Locke
.....	Chris Sides..... Marvin Putman
Closing Prayer	Dwaine Allfrey

Evening Worship

Announcements	Stuart Wilson
Song Leader	Joel Hamm
Prayer	Tyler Cox
Preaching	Song Service
Lord's Supper	Jerry McGlocklin
Closing Prayer	Tommy Burns

Other Assignments for Sunday, August 22nd:

Usher	Rusty Brand
Work Sound System	Danny Johnson