

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF JESUS

A Harmony Of the Gospels

A Daily Devotional Study Guide - Book 2



Week 19

“Feeding of the 5,000”

Study: Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, Luke 9:10-17, John 6:1-13

Reading: Matthew 6:25-34, James 4:13-17

Memory: 1 John 1:6

What Does the Bible Say?

The disciples had gone out to the many towns and villages in the surrounding area to declare the message of the Gospel. It was this spread of the Gospel and the growing popularity of Christ that caused Herod to question if Jesus was John the Baptist who had come back from the dead. When the disciples returned after their time away from Jesus, they traveled with Him to a desolate place on the shore of the Sea of Galilee so they could report back to Him about what they had seen and done as well as to take time to pray. Luke described this as being close to the village of Bethsaida. Jesus wanted to take time to continue to train and teach the disciples as well as to encourage them. He also wanted them to take a time of rest, but with all the people who were coming and going, it was not possible to accomplish this where they were. Though they got in the boat to get away, the crowds saw where the boat was going and they were all waiting for Jesus when He arrived at the shore. Though He wanted to spend time alone with His disciples, He was moved with compassion when He saw the crowd and realized that they were like sheep without a shepherd. (Mt 14:13-14, Mk 6:30-34, Lk 9:10, Jn 6:1).

Jesus spent much of the day teaching the crowd, but it was starting to get dark outside and the people were starting to get hungry. The disciples suggested to Jesus that they send the people away so that they could go into the surrounding towns and villages to buy some food for themselves. Jesus first suggested that the disciples buy food for all those who had come to hear Him speak, but Philip spoke up, knowing that it was impossible for them to feed all those who were in the crowd. He stated that two hundred denarii would not be enough to buy food for all the people. It is assumed that they had two hundred denarii in their treasury, but it could also have been that Philip was just making a statement because the crowd was so large. A denarius was an average wage for one day's work. It would take almost eight months to get 200 denarii and the crowd was so large that such a small amount wouldn't even come close to feeding them. Though they did not have enough

money or food, Jesus insisted that the disciples find a way to feed the people (Mt 14:15-16, Mk 6:35-37, Lk 9:11-13, Jn 6:2-7).

After looking over their situation, Andrew did speak up and told Jesus that there was a boy who had five loaves of bread and two fish, but He realized that thousands of people couldn't split that small meal. We are told that there were 5,000 men present which doesn't include women and children. This means that there could have been 10,000 or 20,000 people to feed with little money and only a small amount of food. Jesus instructed the disciples to organize the people into groups of one hundred and groups of fifty and have them sit down so they could get ready to eat. He then offered thanks for the food and began to break the bread and divide the loaves. In a miraculous way, the bread kept breaking and the fish never ran out. Jesus placed the food into baskets which the disciples used to pass out food to the people. When all the people were full there were twelve full baskets of food leftover that the people did not consume (Mt 14:17-21, Mk 6:38-44, Lk 9:14-17, Jn 6:9-13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you trust God to take care of your needs when it seems impossible that your needs will be taken care of? I heard a phrase during my first year of college that I am not sure I will ever forget. I heard a man say, "God always pays for what He orders." This phrase really stuck out to me and I think of it still today because it reminds me how God's supply is limitless. When you choose to be obedient to Him, even if it means financial sacrifice, He will provide what you need when you need it. Not only does He provide, but many times He will give you much more than you need. You can trust Him to take care of your needs and you do not have to worry about where your financial provisions will come from. This doesn't mean that you will always be rich or never have a time where your faith is tested. God finds pleasure in making the impossible possible. Jesus could have provided food in different ways throughout the day, but in order to bring the most glory to God, Jesus waited until the end of the day. Many times, God provides in normal ways that you don't often notice. Sometimes He provides ahead of time, but He is often glorified the most when He comes through in a miraculous way at the last minute. However God chooses to provide for you, one thing you can always count on is the fact that God will provide. God wants you to trust in Him and watch Him work. Take time today to meditate on all the ways God has provided for your needs. Realize He provides in miraculous ways as well as ordinary ways.

John 6

Where did Jesus go (vs 1)?

Why was a large crowd following Jesus (vs 2)?

Why do you think that more people followed Him for what He could do for them physically than what He could do for them spiritually?

Where did Jesus go when He saw He couldn't get away from the people (vs 3)?

What did John say was coming close (vs 4)?

****One of the questions that many people wonder is how over 5,000 people would be able to get away from everyday life to come and see Jesus. The Passover feast was a national holiday where little or no work was done. The people would gather together and travel in groups to Jerusalem. Most likely, these people were coming from all over, many on their way to Jerusalem and decided to stop in Galilee to get a glimpse of Jesus.*

What did Jesus do when He saw the large crowd (vs 5)?

****Many of these people had probably already traveled a great distance on their way to Jerusalem.*

Why did Jesus ask the disciples about food (vs 6)?

Why did Philip think it was impossible to feed the people (vs 7)?

What did Simon mention (vs 9)?

What did Jesus do once everyone sat down (vs 11)?

What lesson do you think Jesus was teaching His disciples?

What do the leftovers reveal about the power of God?

How have you seen God provide for your needs in a miraculous way?

“Hard to Believe”

Study: Matthew 14:22-33, Mark 6:45-52, John 6:14-21

Reading: John 20:19-1

Memory: 1 John 1:6

What Does the Bible Say?

There is some slight confusion as to the exact geography of the location of the feeding of the 5,000 and the events following. Luke 9:10 stated that Jesus wanted to go to a quiet place to be alone with His disciples so he went to Bethsaida. Mark 6:45 describes how after Jesus finished feeding the 5,000 He ordered them to go to the other side to Bethsaida. John 6:17 says they got into the boat and headed to Capernaum. Though there is no clear explanation for this, it must be remembered that names often referred to regions and not just a city. We do know that Jesus wanted to go to a deserted place to be with His disciples but that the crowd followed Him. If He was going to a deserted place, he would not have gone to a city. The best explanation is that He was on the west side of Galilee by Capernaum when they first started out and went to the east shore past Bethsaida where there was no city. Capernaum and Bethsaida were only a couple of miles apart. After the feeding, they got in the boat and were probably going toward the city of Capernaum traveling past Bethsaida once again.

Jesus was in a hurry to get Himself and the disciples away from the crowd and John explained why that was. After He had fed them, the crowd wanted to take Jesus and make Him their king. He was also in a hurry to get His disciples out to sea so they could get caught in the storm that was going to arise. Another reason He did this was because He wanted to be alone with His Father to pray. The idea of a “mountain” in the Bible is not what we would picture today. It would be a large hill, and there were several large hills surrounding the Sea of Galilee which made the whole region around the sea like a bowl (Matt 14:22-23, Mark 6:45-46, John 6:14-15).

Once the disciples were in the boat and a little ways from shore, the wind started to blow, causing the water to become very choppy and hard to row in. They were fighting against the wind which made their journey long and laborious. By the middle of the night (the fourth watch was 3 a.m. to 6:00 a.m.), the wind had pushed them further away from shore

and they were now towards the middle of the sea.

Jesus then began to walk towards them on top of the water and made it look like He was going to walk right past them. They saw Jesus and were extremely afraid because they thought He was a ghost. Once they became terrified, Jesus immediately identified Himself and told the disciples not to be afraid. Peter, full of emotion by this time, asked Jesus if he could walk on the water as well. Jesus told Him to come and Peter started toward Jesus, but when he started to look around him at the waves and feel how strong the wind was, he began to sink. He cried out for Jesus to save him. Jesus did and asked Peter why his faith was so small when simple faith would have continued to allow him to do the miraculous.

Once Jesus climbed into the boat, the wind and the waves immediately stopped. John recorded how the waves and wind not only ceased, but how the boat was immediately at shore when they had been three to four miles out away from the shore. This amazed the disciples and caused them to declare that Jesus truly was the Son of God. Mark made an interesting observation stating how the disciples didn't understand the miracle of the loaves because their hearts were hard. We are not fully sure what Mark meant by this, but it seems to be a statement that looked back on the little faith the disciples had when they were with Jesus. It is commonly thought that Mark received much of his information from Peter and this seems to be a reference describing how little they believed in Jesus even though they had just seen Him do the miraculous (Matt 14:24-33, Mark 6:47-52, John 6:16-21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you ever think that it would be easier to believe in God if you were able to see the miracles of Jesus in person? Scripture makes it clear that even those who saw what Jesus had done had a hard time believing in Him. Why? Because He was so extraordinary. He did not fit into their human form of thinking which made comprehending His miracles to be quite difficult. You can be like the disciples and have your heart hardened to the power and working of God in your life because of a lack of faith. It is very easy to get trapped into the world of “reality” and forget the supernatural. It is often difficult to trust that God will do as He says He will do because sometimes His ways make no sense to you. Choose to believe even though you can't always see God and His working in your life.

John 6

What did the people start to declare after Jesus fed the 5,000 people (vs 14)?

Why do you think this miracle was the one that convinced them?

What did Jesus realize the people wanted to do (vs 15)?

Why do you think the people wanted to do this?

What did Jesus decide to do when this happened (vs 15)?

Why do you think Jesus went by himself?

What did the disciples do once night started to fall?

****Matthew and Mark say that Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go to the other side while He used the cover of darkness to get away by Himself. Most likely He had set up a meeting point somewhere a few miles away. He sent them on the boat before He left the crowd. He wanted to get away, but also knew that they needed to get away from the crowd as well.*

What happened while the disciples were waiting for Jesus (vs 18)?

What were the disciples attempting to do (vs 19)?

What did they see (vs 19)? What was their response (vs 19)?

How did Jesus calm their fears (vs 20)?

Matthew 14

What did Peter ask (vs 28)?

What happened when Peter started to get scared (vs 30)?

What did Jesus do (vs 31)? What question did Jesus ask (vs 31)?

What lesson do you think Jesus wanted His disciples to learn?

“Spiritual Food”

Study: Matthew 14:34-36, Mark 6:53-56, John 6:22-34

Reading: Philippians 3:17-21, II Peter 2:10-20

Memory: 1 John 1:6

I am not sure where I first heard the phrase, “What it takes to get the people is what it takes to keep the people.” Though I heard this many years ago, in my years of pastoral ministry I have found this phrase to be very true. I have seen many pastors burn themselves out because they plan big events and promotions to attract people, only to keep having to come up with newer and more exciting events and promotions to keep people coming. Understanding this concept has helped me place a focus on the preaching and teaching of the Word of God. My desire is to attract people with the Word of God and not because of some earthly benefit the church can provide.

Today, we are going to see how many people followed Jesus because of what He could provide for them. We will see how Jesus challenged those following Him to seek after spiritual food and not just the earthly benefits that He could give them.

What Does the Bible Say?

Jesus took His disciples to the north west shore of the Sea of Galilee to a town called “Gennesaret.” This town was a few miles west of Capernaum and the people there immediately recognized who Jesus was. A crowd quickly gathered and many of the sick and demon possessed from that region were rounded up and brought to Jesus. Jesus continued to travel in the region with large crowds following Him everywhere He went. Many were seeking just to touch the fringes of His garment knowing that just touching His clothes could help make them whole (Mt 14:34-36, Mk 6:53-56).

Meanwhile, the crowd that Jesus had fed on the east side of Bethsaida was still waiting there, watching for Jesus. They had seen the disciples leave in a boat, but didn’t see Jesus leave. After a while, they began to realize that Jesus was not going to come back to that place where they

were fed so many of them traveled to Capernaum to look for Jesus. They were wondering how they missed Him. They showed interest in Jesus, but Jesus knew that they were only interested in the food that He could provide for them. They wanted Him around because they wanted His provision, but they didn't really want the message that He was declaring. Jesus told them that they should seek after eternal food rather than the temporary food of this earth that does not satisfy (Jn 6:22-27).

The people wanted to know what they needed to do in order to be doing the work that God wanted them to do. Jesus responded by telling them to believe on God who had sent Him to the world to deliver them from their sin. God did not require them to "do" things in order to be a part of the kingdom, but He wanted them to believe (Jn 6:28-29).

They then asked Jesus what sign He would do to reveal to them that He was from God. This seems like a strange question considering that He had just miraculously fed the 5,000 men and was in the process of healing many people of life long diseases. It appears that they were attempting to get Jesus to provide more food for them as they reminded Jesus how manna was provided through Moses for the children of Israel in the wilderness on a regular basis. Jesus corrected them by telling them how it was not Moses that provided, but it was God. Now God was providing them with food that was much more valuable than the earthly manna their fathers had eaten. He was going to provide them with food that would give life to the world. They did not understand because they were still asking for Jesus to give them physical bread (vs 30-34).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you have an earth centered view of God, or an eternal centered view of God? Are you looking to God just to provide for your earthly needs or do you live with a heavenly focus. It is very easy to get caught up in this world and let your opinion and attitude towards God change based on your circumstances. It is easy to trust Him and love Him when He is providing for your needs, but it is much more difficult when you can't see Him working in your physical world. You need to choose to follow God not for earthly food, but for spiritual food. You need to let Him feed your soul and fill you with joy and peace, even in the midst of trials and heartaches. God will completely satisfy you if you look to Him in the right way for the right things. So often, believers live unfulfilled because they seek God to meet their earthly needs and neglect Him when it comes to meeting their spiritual needs.

John 6

What had the crowd observed (vs 22)?

What did the crowds desire to do (vs 23-24)?

What did they want to know (vs 25)?

Why did Jesus say they were seeking after Him (vs 26)?

What did Jesus tell them not to seek for (vs 27)?

Why do you think it is easy to attempt to follow God for the material benefits He can offer?

What did the people want to know (vs 28)?

What one word did Jesus say the people needed to do (vs 29)?

Why do you think it is natural for people to want to work their way into heaven?

What did the people ask for (vs 30)?

What illustration did they use (vs 31)?

Why did Jesus direct their attention from Moses to God (vs 32-33)?

What bread was Jesus talking about (vs 33)?

Why do you think it is so natural for men to miss out on the great importance of spiritual food and focus on earthly existence?

What did the people ask Jesus to do (vs 34)?

Do you think they really wanted the eternal bread Jesus was talking about?

****We will read more about this tomorrow as Jesus attempted to turn their attention to eternal things.*

“I Am the Bread of Life”

Study: John 6:35-51

Reading: Ephesians 1:1-22

Memory: 1 John 1:6

There was a time where we prayed very specifically that God would lead us to the exact vehicle we wanted for the exact price we wanted to spend and He did that. We enjoyed that mini-van for a while, and when it came time that we needed another vehicle, we wanted the same type of van. I prayed about it once again, and after a while, it seemed that God was working everything out to provide for us again the exact van that we wanted. We bought it, but after owning it for less than a year, we spent a few thousand dollars getting it repaired. We started to think that we made a mistake with the second mini-van because we thought “If it was God that picked this one for us, He certainly wouldn’t have picked a lemon.” The truth is that God provided both of the vans for us and He knew that one would be better than the other. He was teaching us a lesson that He is not our God just to give us the physical things we desire, but He wants us to turn to Him in the good times and the bad.

Today, we are going to read how the Jews wanted to follow Jesus for His physical provision, but they really didn’t want to follow Him with their whole lives.

What Does the Bible Say?

Some of the crowd who had been fed by Jesus followed Him, desiring for Him to give them more bread. They wanted Him to provide their physical needs, but Jesus wanted them to see their spiritual need. He told them that He was the “bread of life.” Those who chose to trust in Him would find satisfaction for their spiritual hunger and spiritual thirst. Yet, many had followed Jesus around and had seen the many miracles He had performed and did not believe. Jesus knew that God would draw men unto Him and those who yielded to this drawing and chose to believe on Him would find eternal life. Jesus had come to earth for a greater purpose than to be their Provider. He had come to do the will of His Father and to make a way for all men to have eternal life (vs 35-39).

The claims of Jesus did not settle well with many who had listened to Him speak. They did not understand how He could say He was from heaven when they knew that He grew up in Nazareth and was the Son of Joseph and Mary. Though He had performed many miraculous and wonderful things in their sight, they did not have their eyes opened to believe. Jesus told them not to grumble amongst themselves about the truth that He was speaking. Those who would choose to believe on Him would be drawn by God to Jesus. It was those who believed that would rise unto eternal life in the end times. It appears here that Jesus was telling the people that He was not going to force them to believe. They needed to have their eyes open to the working of God through Jesus, which would help draw them to believe in Him. Jesus supported this thought by paraphrasing Isaiah 54:13 which indicated that those who would believe on the Son would be moved by the Father to do so. Jesus was the only one who had seen the Father and the Father chose to use Jesus to teach the people His way of salvation (vs 40-46).

Jesus told the people that they must believe in Him and the message that He was declaring in order to have eternal life. The people wanted physical bread like the manna that God has provided for their forefathers, but most of them were just seeking temporary fulfillment. Jesus had come to give them eternal satisfaction and wanted to be their spiritual bread. He knew that if they believed on Him (ate of Him) they would find true fulfillment and satisfaction in this life and a future hope in the life to come. This spiritual fulfillment would come through the physical death and resurrection that Jesus was going to experience (vs 47-51)

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you find yourself following after God for the pleasures He can provide for you? Are you living with a focus on eternal things? It is easy to follow God for the blessings He can give you on this earth and miss the fact that you have been saved for eternity. This doesn’t mean that your life on earth will be miserable. It should be full of joy, but joy is different than happiness that is based on outward circumstances. One of the best ways to know if you are looking to God with an eternal focus is to evaluate how you react when things don’t go the way you think they should. Do you lose joy when your financial situation looks bleak? Do you get discouraged when your earthly goals and dreams are shattered by an unexpected event or illness? How you respond will reveal what is in your heart. Take time today to ask God to show you where you are not allowing Him to give you the true fulfillment that He wants you to have.

What did Jesus declare He was (vs 35)?

What happens to those who eat this bread (vs 35)?

What point do you think Jesus was making in verse 35?

Who was Jesus addressing (vs 36)?

What will Jesus not do for those who come to Him (vs 37)?

Why did Jesus say He came from heaven (vs 38)?

What did Jesus say God's will was (vs 39)?

What else did Jesus say was God's will (vs 40)?

What did the Jews grumble about (vs 41)? Why (vs 42)?

What did Jesus say about those who came to Him (vs 44)?

Why do you think Jesus said this?

****He wanted them to understand that He and His Father were not acting separately, but were working together to save those who heeded the call.*

What did Jesus quote from Isaiah 54:13 (vs 45)?

What clarification did Jesus make in verse 46?

What do those who believe have (vs 47)?

What did Jesus declare He was (vs 48)?

How did this bread compare to manna (vs 49-50)?

What will happen to those who eat of what Jesus had to offer (vs 51)?

What did Jesus give so believers might have life (vs 51)?

“Many Turned from Him”

Study: John 6:51-71

Reading: Ecclesiastes 7:1-29

Memory: 1 John 1:6

What Does the Bible Say?

When Jesus described how He was going to be the “Bread of Life” He was stating that His body would be the flesh that they would need to eat. He wasn’t saying that they needed to literally eat His physical body, but was making reference to the fact that He was going to die in the flesh. Those who chose to believe in Him and His physical work for their spiritual salvation would find true life. This caused great confusion among the people as they wondered how they could actually eat the body of Jesus. They did not understand why He had come nor what He was going to do for them (vs 51-52).

When Jesus knew that they talked amongst themselves about this, He added that they not only needed to eat His flesh, but also drink His blood. Eating His flesh was confusing enough, but they did not drink the blood of any of the animals that they sacrificed. Though they were thoroughly confused, Jesus went on to explain how they must eat of His flesh and drink of His blood in order to have eternal life. His flesh and His blood were the true food and true drink. They were the way to abiding with God and having God live in them. Jesus existed in the flesh because He was sent by His Father to the earth. Jesus had life because of the Father and those who partook in Jesus would have life because of the Son. Jesus was the bread that came down from heaven. He was different than the manna that God used to provide physical food for the Israelites in the wilderness. Jesus was the spiritual bread that would fill the eternal hunger and longing that all men are born with (vs 53-59).

Jesus taught this while He was in the synagogue and afterwards many who had followed Him talked amongst themselves about how confusing this message of Jesus was. Knowing what was taking place, Jesus asked them if they were bothered by His statements. He asked them how they would respond if He ascended to heaven right there in front of them. He related to them how the “flesh” He was referring to was not the actual physical eating of the flesh, but it was the Spirit that gave life. Some would not understand what He was saying because all they wanted was

physical happiness, though He had come to fill the spiritual hunger of many. This is why only those whose eyes were opened to the truth of God would have eternal life (vs 60-65).

These statements of Jesus, and the fact that He did not intend to provide physical food for them, caused many to stop following Him. They had traveled around with Him and sought to hear Him, but when His message became harder to understand and when they realized that following Him was not going to be easy, many of them turned from Him and went back home. Jesus asked the twelve if they wanted to turn from Him and go home also. To this Peter responded by telling Jesus they had no where else to go since He was the One with the words that would lead to eternal life (vs 66-69).

Jesus was pleased that they chose to follow but mentioned that He had chosen twelve yet He knew that there was one of the twelve who did not really believe and would betray Him. John related how Jesus spoke of Judas Iscariot, though they did not have a clue who it might be at that time (vs 70-71).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you willing to follow the path of God for your life though it might not always be easy? Are you willing to follow Him if it means pain and persecution? Many chose to no longer follow Jesus when He revealed that He would not provide physically for their needs. They were looking for someone to make their life easier, but instead, following Him would make their life more difficult in some ways. They did not realize the strength that God would give, nor the true spiritual satisfaction that would come from following Him. This is a great reminder for you, especially when life gets hard and you sometimes want to ask, “Where is God?” God is on the throne and has always been in control, but Jesus came to give spiritual rest and peace, not always physical rest and peace. This does not mean that you will always face heartaches as a follower of Christ, but it means that you are not exempt from them either.

Thought for the day

What did the Jews have a problem understanding (vs 51)?

What did Jesus add to the illustration He had been using (vs 53)?

Who will have eternal life (vs 54)?

What did Jesus say about His flesh and His blood (vs 55)?

What do you think it means to “abide” in Jesus (vs 56)?

Why do you think Jesus equated Himself with the Father many times in this passage?

****The Jews claimed they believed in God, but they rejected Jesus. Jesus wanted them to know that if they truly believed in God, they would also believe in Him.*

How was Jesus different than physical bread (vs 58)?

What did the disciples struggle with (vs 60)?

What did Jesus ask them (vs 61)? Why do you think He asked them this?

What scenario did Jesus bring up (vs 62)? Why do you think He did this?

What powerful statement did Jesus declare (vs 63)?

What did Jesus state (vs 64)?

What did Jesus emphasize (vs 65)?

What happened after Jesus declared He would no longer give them bread (vs 66)?

What did Jesus ask the remaining disciples (vs 67)?

What did Peter declare (vs 68-69)?

What did Jesus know?

“Corban”

Study: Matthew 15:1-9, Mark 7:1-13, John 7:1

Reading: Isaiah 29:11-24, Galatians 2:11-14

Memory: 1 John 1:6

There have been a few church meetings that I have attended where it was clearly evident that some people had a wrong focus in life. I would understand if people were upset because the church had become lax in their outreach or if some of the church members stood up and rebuked others for not studying the Word of God like they should, or to publicly declare that the church needed to do more to take care of their missionaries or the poor in their area. Yet, I have never seen that take place in a heated church meeting. The things I have observed that have caused issues are often things that don't really matter for eternity, but they go against a certain tradition or are based on feelings that a person or small group of people have. In almost every case, it is about a personal preference on some external matter. These preferences have become equal to the Word of God in someone's mind and because if it, great conflicts are caused because the focus is on the earthly things and not the true spiritual matters.

Today, we are going to read how it is easy to become like a Pharisee and put our attention and focus on things that don't really matter.

What Does the Bible Say?

The fame of Jesus was spreading more and more, but Jesus stayed in the region of Galilee because He knew that the sentiment towards Him in Jerusalem was becoming very dangerous (John 7:1). This can be seen by the way Jewish leaders traveled from Jerusalem in an attempt to discredit the ministry of Jesus and to try to stop His influence. One of the things that these religious leaders noticed was that the disciples did not wash their hands before they ate. These Pharisees were not concerned about the personal hygiene of the disciples of Jesus, rather they were scrutinizing the disciples for the lack of ceremonial cleanliness. The Pharisees had established all types of man-made laws about the way a person should wash their hands before they ate, even to the point of describing how they should allow the water to drip off their wrists and

not their fingertips. The Pharisees taught that for a person to be truly “godly” they must wash their hands a certain way. In addition to this, they had also made up all types of rules concerning the washing of dishes and dining room furniture (Mt. 15:1-2, Mk 7:1-5).

Jesus responded by describing how Isaiah predicted the hypocrisy that they were practicing. Isaiah 29:13 described how the people worshiped God with their mouths, but not from their hearts. The Pharisees said they worshiped God, but they really didn't. This was because they esteemed their man made laws and regulations as more important than the commandments of God. Jesus gave an example of their hypocrisy by describing how the Law stated that they needed to honor their fathers and mothers. Instead of obeying this law that God gave them, the Pharisees stated that they could declare “corban” for all their possessions and no longer be responsible to take care of their parents. “Corban” meant “given to God.” Basically, what the Pharisees were saying was that they could dedicate all their possessions to God and therefore did not have to use any of them to help take care of their aging parents. This and many other hypocritical things like this were being practiced as their man made laws and ordinances superceded the Word of God (Mt. 15:3-9, Mk 7:6-13).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Are you concerned with keeping the clear written Word of God, or do you find yourself attempting to follow man-made regulations instead? It is easier than you realize to become legalistic in a variety of areas and start putting more emphasis on those things than you do on keeping the Word of God. This does not mean that you have to cast off rules and regulations put in place by a church or organization to help it function smoothly, but it must be remembered that those rules and regulations are there to assist you in keeping God's Word and not to become equal to or more important than God's Word. This is clearly seen in many churches as traditions often become just as or more important than the Word of God. Traditions and extra biblical guidelines are often good, but they will need to change in time to fit the culture and different situations of individuals and churches. God's Word never needs to change because it applies to every generation. It is vital to understand this for a church to be effective over the long term. Certain extra biblical guidelines that are made to help now might not be the same a few years from now because outward circumstances may change.

John 7

Why did Jesus choose to do much of His ministry in Capernaum (vs 1)?

Mark 7

Who had gathered around Jesus (vs 1)?

Why do you think scribes had come from Jerusalem?

What did they see that the disciples did (vs 2)?

Why did John say the religious leaders were upset (vs 3)?

What would the people not do (vs 4)?

What other rules and regulations did they follow (vs 4)?

Why do you think the religious leaders made and followed so many extra biblical rules?

What did the religious leaders want to know (vs 5)?

What was emphasized in this question (vs 5)?

Why do you think religious traditions become so important?

How did Jesus reveal that God knew this would happen (vs 6-7)?

What does this reveal about the natural tendency of religious people?

What were they ultimately doing (vs 8)?

How have you seen this happen in today's society?

What were the people doing (vs 9)?

What example did Jesus give (vs 10-12)?

What were they doing when they chose not to take care of their families and declared their possessions were only for God (vs 13)?

Memory Verses

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life— 2 the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us— 3 that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. 4 And we are writing these things so that our joy may be complete. 5 This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.