

**March 19, 2021**

**Text: Mark 7:7-9**

“They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.” And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions!”

**Devotion:** Matt Salvati

In this passage the pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus why his disciples did not wash their hands before eating. Jesus’ reply referenced Isaiah 29:13 - The Lord says: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.”

It would have been interesting to hear Jesus’ response in person. I can imagine feeling quite convicted while listening to Him speak, reflecting on the ways that I hold onto unnecessary traditions in my own life. His statement in the passage is timeless as it applies just as much to us now as it did back then.

Take some time to reflect on the following questions:

- How do our traditions influence the way we worship? Do they get in the way of what is most important?
- Do we set aside God’s commands to preserve our way of doing things?

At times we allow worldly influences to direct our lives more than they should. But Jesus provides His grace and forgiveness, reminding us that true worship is possible if we fix our eyes and our hearts on Him.

Prayer: Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for sending Jesus, who lived the perfect life and died for our sins. Help us to let go of the unnecessary traditions that hinder our relationship with you. Create in us clean hearts this Lenten season, so that we may grow in love for You and one another. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.