

The Dangers of Keeping Tradition

✘ There was a song in the musical *Fiddler on the Roof* called “Tradition.” As this Jewish father sang this song, this message was immediately conveyed: Life is full of traditions.

Traditions can be meaningful, but sometimes they get in the way of the effectiveness of God’s Word in our lives, and they can become very burdensome. As you listen to the song “Tradition” in the film, you can hear the frustration and weariness in the voice of the father. He too had worn himself out trying to keep all the traditions. Keeping traditions can also sometimes prevent us from seeing the newness and freshness of life.

Cooking Is a Curse

Psalm 81:1-16 Today’s reading includes a promise of God I’ve been claiming for years: “I removed his shoulder from the burden: his hands were delivered from the pots” (v. 6, KJV).

The Cost of Discipleship

Luke 14:7-35 Jesus shares in this passage the cost of discipleship. He says clearly that discipleship requires forsaking all. He shares the parable about the man who

prepared a great supper and invited many to come. Those invited had excuses for not attending the dinner. One man was too busy with his possessions, another was too busy with his business, and another was too busy with his family.

Prosperity and Success

Deuteronomy 34:1-Joshua 2:24 So many seek success and desire to prosper. Financial seminars are held to teach people how to invest and make the most of their money. Training seminars on selling yourself to the interviewer are attended by those who desire to advance in the business world. The Lord sees prosperity and success totally opposite of the way the world sees it.

The Lord Will Defend You

☒ When we were in St. Petersburg, Russia, for an evangelical music festival designed to reach Jewish people, one of the musicians sang a song that I'll never forget. The phrase "He is my defense" was repeated over and over again in the song. That phrase still resounds in my spiritual ears.

Fertilizing the Seed

Luke 13:1-22 This passage in Luke has special meaning to me because the plea of the vine dresser became a prayer my husband and I prayed for a church we were attending. In this church the pastor was open to the things of the Spirit, but most of his congregation were not. They did not want any changes. We were in this church for three years when we attended a Sunday school retreat. The retreat was in Calloway Gardens in South Georgia, and we were in charge of getting the speaker.

Coming Ready or Not

Luke 12:35-59 Remember the game “hide and seek”? One child closes his eyes and counts to ten while the other child hides. At the count of ten, the child opens his eyes and begins his search by saying, “Coming ready or not!” Then this child diligently searches high and low to find where the other child is hiding. I recall being a child hiding, and the moment the one who sought me found me, my heart jumped and I always yelled loudly “Boo” to scare him.

God's Pleasure

Luke 12:8-34 My life verse is Philippians 2:13: “It is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.” It was such a joy to have this understanding when I was twenty-

six years old. I was at a retreat, and our leader instructed us to go out by the lakeside and be quiet and still before the Lord. We were instructed to ask the Lord questions and then wait for answers. Waiting for an answer when I prayed was a new experience for me, as usually all my prayers were one-way conversations with the Lord. What happened in a twenty-minute span of time changed my whole life.

Peace Brings Joy

Proverbs 12:19-20 Counselors of peace have joy.” Romans 14:17 tells us, “For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.” In yesterday’s reading we learned that Jesus is the kingdom of God. He is all righteousness, all peace and all joy, and we can enter into the kingdom when we ask Jesus to come into our hearts and take over our lives. I do not know a person on earth who does not desire to be right with God and his fellowman, to have peace and to experience joy. Jesus came preaching the kingdom of God, and sometimes we forget this is our message also. In addition to preaching the kingdom, we also now can tell of the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who now sits in heaven making intercession for us. The gospel should contain all of these facts.

Jesus Redeems Our Mistakes

Luke 11:14-36 One of the favorite expressions in our family is, "Well, nobody is perfect." We all make mistakes, and I am so ever grateful for our Lord Jesus Christ, who is our redeemer. He is able to take our messes and make something worthwhile out of them. As I was reading this morning about another ministry Jesus had, I recalled an incident I experienced in India.