

Traditions of men – Blind Leaders leading the blind

A prophetic message for the ministers of God



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Traditions of men – Blind leaders leading the blind



Let us read Mathew 15:1-20. Scribes and Pharisees, who were of Jerusalem, wanted to know from Jesus why His disciples transgressed the tradition of the elders for they washed not their hands when they ate bread. Jesus then posed a question to the Scribes and Pharisees, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition”. Then Jesus pointed out to them that by not honoring the parents, they broke the commandment of God by their tradition of telling their parents that the children were gifts of the latter. Then Jesus told the Pharisees and Scribes, “ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

The Scribes and Pharisees were adding to the commandment of God their own traditions. Instead of honoring the parents with service, they merely told the parents that what they (parents) would have gained from them was given to God, and they (children) need not honor their parents. The children were supposed to honor their parents by service and not to tell them that they were gifts of God that would benefit the parents in due course. It was merely a lip service but not a service through hands. The attitude to do such a service had to be emanated from their hearts. In the same manner, the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem honored God with their lips but their heart was from Him. In vain they worshiped Him in the Temple but their heart was from Him. They taught for doctrines the commandments of men. They relegated the commandment of God to the background but worshiped Him in the Temple. Jesus made a clear distinction between the Old Testament, which was the commandment of God and the Pharisaic tradition, which consisted of merely human pronouncements.

Today, many teachers in the Body of Christ are likened to the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem. The Scribes and Pharisees were part of the Temple and were not outside the Temple. They were the teachers of law. They taught the law but added their traditions to it. Even today also, we find traditions of men laying emphasis on outward ceremonies. But their heart was far from God. They taught the law through their lips but taught their own traditions. If we observe every church or every Christian ministry, we can observe the same kind of teaching system of the Scribes and

Pharisees. They just give sermons from pulpits or stages, quoting the Scriptures, saying that this is the message of God. They just teach us how to observe the commandments of God outwardly but their own hearts are far from Him. They themselves do not follow the commandments of God and their life styles exhibiting greediness and covetousness show that their heart was far from God. They covet praises of men, offerings, service and honor from the people they are supposed to serve as servants. They also always to love to preach like the Scribes and Pharisees by grabbing every pulpit. Their heart is full of pride as they think that the children of God to whom they minister are just below them spiritually and that God has only given them (preachers) gifts and talents.

The Scribes and Pharisees of today are those we preach but do not live the gospel. If they preach long messages prepared from the Bible texts which they do not follow themselves, their messages are just men's traditions. Today many churches have become citadels of men's traditions because the elders (pastors) preach with a heart full of pride and covetousness. They want to hear the words of praise but not the words of criticism or rebuke from them who are on the pews. They stifle the prophetic voice of the children of God in their midst. Quoting the Scriptures, they just want the children of God to give to their projects or their churches sacrificially whereas they do not minister in their churches to the needy and poor, the widows who are unable to buy houses, the fatherless children who are unable to secure admissions to professional

colleges or schools, etc. They want the "congregation" to trust God for all their needs saying God is Jehovah Yireh, whereas they do not trust God for their needs and go to their congregation or their subscribers/readers with their begging bowls. They covet the prayers of their "congregation" or "supporters" by asking them to pray for them daily whereas they do not pray for their congregation or supporters because they do not know the names of their congregation or supporters.

Defilement in the heart

Then Jesus called the multitudes and told them, "Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man: but that which cometh out of the mouth this defileth a man (Vs.11). The disciples then informed Jesus that the Pharisees were offended after they heard this. This message of Jesus was meant for those who were the teachers of law. There was a relationship between the preaching of law through lips and the defiling that takes place in the heart of the preacher. According to Jesus, what defile the man are those proceeding from his heart i.e. "evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnesses, blasphemies".

The preacher of the gospel may not be indulging in the grievous and abominable sins like murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, blasphemies but may be nurturing "evil thoughts" about how to lower the reputation of his opponents, how to escape the laws of the land, how to browbeat the fellow pastors or fellow evangelists, how to misuse the funds received from the children

of God for purposes other than that for which he or she had approached the congregation or the supporters, how to write an exaggerated report about his/her ministry, how to attack or silence his opponents, etc.,. Such evil thoughts themselves would defile him/her, though he/she might not have actually performed such deeds. Evil thoughts top the list. Then comes the list of other grievous sins. Murders which also proceed from the heart take the second place only.

What about false witnesses? Many of the preachers of the gospel falsely witness in the courts of law and before their congregations or supporters. Witness means a person who witnesses an incident. If that witness reports something else which he or she has not actually witnessed, it is a false witness. In the magazine of a popular international evangelist, he claims to have prepared about 400 million of people of God for the Second Advent of Jesus Christ. In some magazine reports, we find that Bro. X was used by God mightily in place Y. It is for God to witness if X was used mightily or not. Simply because some miracles took place, if he or she boasts that God has used him mightily, it becomes a false witness only. If you simply say, God used him/her in place Y, it is good. If you claim three thousands or three hundreds have attended your meeting but, in the sight of God, only two thousands or two hundreds as the case may be, attended your meeting, you become a false witness.

Plants not planted by the Father in His Garden

Then Jesus said in Verse 13, “Every plant, which My Heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up”. This warning of Jesus may appear horrible to us. When we become the children of God, God does appoint every one of us to some kind of work in His garden. He appoints some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelists, some as pastors, etc. We have to fulfill the single commandment of God i.e. great commission of preaching the gospel all over the world. Thus our ministry or service in His garden becomes the plant planted by God. Every plant in His garden has to fulfill the great commission of the Lord either directly or indirectly.

You may be an engineer, a doctor, a teacher, a student, a clerk or a factory worker. But you are a minister of God entrusted with the great commission of the Lord. You may be an evangelist to preach the gospel to your colleagues. If you are led by the Lord to go to a distant place not reached by the gospel and where you happen to work as a teacher or an engineer with your own hands to eke out a living, you may be an apostle there to preach the gospel and to plant a church or churches. If you are pasturing a church now, you can be an evangelist in that place and your focus should be to evangelize that place. And you should keep moving to other places for evangelism. You may be working as a nurse in a hospital. The Lord might have appointed as a prophet. In that case, you have to minister to the children of God prophetically. You may be a journalist. The Lord might have appointed you as a teacher.

You have to teach and mentor the new believers and to edify the Body of Christ through your teaching ministry, exposing false doctrines. Like this, God plants every plant in His garden.

If I plant my own plant which does not fulfill the great commission of the Lord either directly or indirectly, that plant which is not planted by God shall be uprooted. If I build an image for myself in God's vineyard, or I build my own kingdom promoting my own image in God's vineyard, that plant needs to be uprooted. Today we find many images of those who have been entrusted with the great commission. Though God has appointed them to various works in His garden, they have planted their own plants bearing their images. Only the plant planted by the Father yields fruits after the same is pruned periodically by the Gardener through the knife of prophets.

Today many children of God are being born into the Kingdom of Christ but we do not find their plants in His garden. They are just outside His garden without doing the jobs assigned to them by the Gardener. They just stand idle all the day even in the eleventh hour and say, "No one has hired us" (Matt.20:6). The evangelists who had brought them to Christ should have entrusted them to the care of the pastors and teachers in the local churches. The pastors and teachers in the local churches should have mentored them not only through their own ministries but also through the ministries of apostles and prophets in the Body of Christ. The new believers need to have apostolic vision which has to be

imparted only by the mission leaders or apostles who have worked as apostles or cross-cultural missionaries in distant places. The new believers need to be mentored through prophets who have worked as prophets in God's vineyard. There are millions of Christians in the outer court or outside the garden, standing idle all the day. There is no coordination between all these five types of ministers in mentoring and equipping the children of God for the ministry.

Every minister, be it a pastor or a prophet, has made the Lord's flock his/her own sheep so as to be milked. The Lord's flock are just made their partners in building their own empires. They have taken away the sheep from the Lord's fold and have misappropriated them for building their own empires. "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of My pasture! saith the Lord". The Lord says against the pastors that feed His people, "Ye have scattered My flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of our doings (Jer.23:1-2)' These days, the Lord's sheep are being scattered and driven away from His presence. The elders have not visited them. Prophetically, visit does not mean paying a visit to their houses. Taking personal care of and feeding the Lord's sheep with the right diet are the duties of a pastor. If you do not properly feed them, they will be scattered just to search for green pastures and they will be driven away from the presence of the Lord. Today many sheep of the Lord are found tagged to their pastors only and not to the universal body of Christ with the result that the Lord's sheep do not

have a vision for evangelism of places not reached by the gospel and do not love the whole Body of Christ.

If I build a church or a building that does not fulfill His great commission either directly or indirectly or if what I build or make in His vineyard ultimately mislead the children of God or take them to a work different from the great work of evangelism, that building or that plant has to be uprooted. In these last days, some servants of God deceived by the devil take the children of God to the holy land for expediting the construction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem and claim that their ministries prepare the children of God for the Second Advent of Jesus Christ, it is surely nothing but a deviation from the plan and purpose of God for the Church.

Blind leaders in churches and ministries

Then Jesus calls such leaders “blind leaders”. “And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch”. This is what is happening in today’s Christian world. Blind leaders lead the blind people of God who do not read the Word of God. The leaders are blind because they have no vision for the whole Body of Christ. Their vision is confined to their narrow church borders or their ministry borders and does not go beyond that. They build churches bearing their names in their own towns but do not take pains to build churches in villages and places where there are no churches or where the saints worship God in thatched sheds. How can such leaders lead

the other people of God in their churches? The congregation worshipping God in their churches will have the same vision of building churches in places which have already been evangelized or where there are churches in every corner of the city/town. If these leaders start bible colleges and teach their students, their students may study theology and Bible and acquire head knowledge but in their vision, they will follow their teachers only and they will not go to those places not reached by the gospel. Ultimately such students will expect these church leaders to appoint them in their churches as pastors. The disciples are like their teachers only.

These leaders may lead the congregation in worship. But they are blind. They do not see the Jesus Christ of Nazareth in their midst, though they had accepted Him as their savior. They are blind to the great commission of the Lord. They train the people to worship God outwardly but do not equip them for the ministry. Those who are sitting on the pews continue to sit on the pews and are not equipped to preach the gospel. Those who are on the pews do not read the Bible themselves but take notes of the sermons given by their leaders who do not themselves follow what they teach. The audience do not meditate and examine the Word of God. They want to be spoon-fed by their pastors who display all their talents and gifts on the pulpits/stages. If blind leaders lead the congregation in worshipping, the blind worshippers will never worship the Father in spirit and truth. They just shout at the top of their voices, lift up their hands on Sundays, hear their pastors and go away, just to make their debut on the

ensuing Sunday. Both the blind people worship “the living God” in their midst. It is like the non-Christians worshipping the unknown God in their places of worship. The people of God going out of these churches look all the same like those non-Christian sisters and brethren who go out of their places of worship. What makes you and me a special people, chosen of God? Where are the Peters and Johns who make the lame man walk in front of the multitudes in the Name of Jesus Christ?

If blind prophets teach the children of God who do not meditate on the prophetic books of the Bible and who just believe whatever is taught to them by the prophets, both of them will fall into the ditch. There are thousands of children of God who go in search of “prophets” or “prophetic words” without reading the Word or without sitting at the feet of the Lord. They just flock “prophetic seminars” which are quite unscriptural. The young prophetic ministers need to be mentored by the elder prophets, not by preaching from men-made stages but by teaching through ‘U’ shaped small meetings where the young can freely interact with the elder. It should be a prophetic school and not a seminar or a big meeting. In Delhi, a prophetic minister made a wide publicity about his prophetic seminar and informed that God had led him to hold the seminar on some particular dates. But he could not hold the same because he could not get responses from a large number of people or a crowd. Then he cancelled and postponed the seminar. If God had led or directed him to hold the seminar on the dates fixed as claimed by him, how could he change it just because he could not get

adequate crowd to hear him preach? Even if some few people had responded, he could have taught them individually because he was “led” by God. It is a men’s tradition of speaking to a crowd. Corruption has set in even in prophetic ministries which are supposed to show the light to the children of God who grope in the dark.

I came across a young person who had sought an appointment with a popular pastor of a mega-church but could not meet the latter in the city. I asked him whether he was able to meet his Master for which no appointment was needed. This is the state of affairs in our churches and ministries. Seeking appointment in God’s vineyard to meet the elders is a human tradition because meeting VIPs through appointments is of this world. The ministers of God, who are servants, must make themselves available to those to whom they minister. If their church grows into a big crowd not manageable by themselves, they should open small churches in other localities which should be pastured by the elders. The leader who wants to subjugate the Lord’s sheep to men-made traditions is blind. The children of God who subjugate themselves to the ministry of blind elders without understanding their destiny in Christ and their role in God’s vineyard are also blind.

Many children of God understand the term “ministry” as preaching from a pulpit or from a dais. Pastors also think that their main job is to preach to their “congregations”. Preaching from a dais is a human tradition. But teaching and learning together the Word of God in a small group is scriptural. Jesus daily taught in the

synagogues. Are we teaching the children of God by interacting with them face to face? The elders covet pulpits to preach to a crowd but do not teach to a small group. Preaching to the multitudes through television or a meeting is a human tradition whereas teaching to a small group face to face is scriptural. Preaching the gospel to the multitudes of lost souls through television is scriptural but teaching the children of God through television is not scriptural but traditional. Building a church for mere worship is a human tradition and a religious activity because non-Christian brethren and sisters also build religious places for worship. But building a church for evangelism and fellowship is scriptural.

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