

# Friday, March 12

Today's Reading: Matthew Chapter 15

Today's Devotional Message is by Sandi Dixon

*Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?" Matthew 15:1-3*

Tradition – we have just come through the Christmas season – a time of year steeped in tradition in many of our families. When do you open gifts? What food do you serve? And those special cookies – they are a family tradition, right?

We have many traditions in the church too. In this section of Matthew, Jesus is warning us not to elevate our traditions to the same status as God's commands. The Pharisees and scribes (religious people of Jesus' day) had created many traditions for the people to live by and considered them equally as important as the commands that God had given them. The very people God had entrusted with promoting his Word were encouraging the church to focus on the wrong things thereby leading God's people far from what God felt was most important.

Certain religious traditions can add richness and meaning to our lives. However, we must not assume that because our traditions have been carried out for years, they should be elevated to a holy level. God's principles never change and his law, the Bible, doesn't need any additions. Traditions should help us understand God's laws better, not become laws themselves. This should open us up to change in the church and the way we do things. Don't let the traditions of Joy Community Church ever become more important than the Word of God for you.

Prayer: O God of All, You have given us many wonderful things including the traditions in our homes and at our church. Lord, help us to see when any of our traditions become more important to us than following you. Help us stay tuned in to your Word by continuing in regular Bible reading and devotion. Make that a tradition in our hearts today. Thank you Jesus for coming and showing us how our actions can take us far away from you, for your forgiveness when we fail, and your never-failing love which brings us back again and again. Amen.