

SOLA SCRIPTURA

“... by Your Tradition!”

Glen C. Robertson

GROWING UP IN small Native Indian and ethnic towns and missionary churches in rural Canada (my ancestors had been early pioneer missionaries to the Native Indian tribes of rural Canada), and then in city churches of almost every stripe, I had, as a young man, experience in many different types of churches and traditions. When my family finally moved to the city from the country we had to discover which Denomination and kind of church we were comfortable in, and tried a number of different ones. And I found, each time my family moved to a different location, or type of church, what each different church required of its members. These requirements were declared by that church to be necessary for Godliness, and therefore also established under what conditions a person would be accepted by that particular church body.

In each church these requirements rarely if ever were demonstrated to be requirements from Scripture. They were therefore evidently simply the requirements of the leadership or the congregation of that particular church. And I quickly found that if I didn't follow those requirements I would be treated as a sinner, and ostracized from that group. But at the same time I was in my young to middle teens, so also seeking to discover and learn life and reality. I had made Christ my Lord and Saviour at @ age 5, and my conversion was sincere and strong. But by my teens I was seeking the reality of HOW TO LIVE my faith.

So the requirements that each church held for its members were seen in stark reality on

THREE LEVELS:

- a) How to live a Christian life among people,**
- b) How to live a Christian life toward God, and**
- c) How living a life as a Christian among people affects one's own relationship with God!**

I found that if I wanted to be accepted by the particular church body among whom my family was worshipping at that period of time I had to follow the particular customs and traditions that that particular church body stated were necessary for Godliness. If I continued to live the Christian life I had lived among the previous church we attended, a life of requirements the previous church had expected of me, I would usually be looked down upon and ostracized by the next church/denomination we attended! So, in order to be accepted by my latest church I would have to be a hypocrite, living what I saw no need in Scripture to live!

a) How to live a Christian life among people affected me, personally:

9 And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10 Only they would that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

15 We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles,

16 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

17 But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

Galatians 2:11-17 The BIBLE

And the next church after that would again demand yet other different/more requirements than the other church(es) had! I got a distinct impression of a passage I would later read in Scripture:

2 I have spread out my hands all the day unto a ... people, which walketh in a way that was ... after their own thoughts;

...

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou... .

Isaiah 65:2,5 The BIBLE

I found I was being taught that doing what the church body required was more important than loving and following God Himself, and more important than loving and accepting into the Body of Christ everybody who was born again. And I found I had been taught to reject those who left this church to fellowship in other churches instead. And I attended the churches my family attended. And my conversion was sincere and deep. And I had been born again in a Christian family. But what if I had been a new convert, in charge of my own church attendance and Spiritual maturation, or were less sincere in my faith? My experiences in many different Church Denominations and Bodies early convinced me, even at that young age, that such a person might certainly be offended and turn away from the Faith under such negative receptions!

In other words: **b) How to live a Christian life toward God affected others.**

7 For the priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for he is the messenger of the LORD of hosts.

8 But ye are departed out of the way; ye have caused many to stumble at the law; ye have corrupted the covenant of Levi, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 2:7-8 The BIBLE

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

Matthew 23:13-15 The BIBLE

14 And shall say, Cast ye up, cast ye up, prepare the way, take up the stumblingblock out of the way of my people.

Isaiah 57:14 The BIBLE

Indeed, Jesus spoke of how very relationship with God, salvation itself, is often passed over, and even prevented, because of someone's greater concern for custom and tradition, for a fake holiness and a faux relationship with God!

23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.

Matthew 23:23-27 The BIBLE

As I grew into adulthood, and as I graduated from Bible College, I of course felt a certain affinity with the most previous Denomination my family had settled into, and whose Bible College I had attended. But, given my cosmopolitan experience of many different Denominations and experiences throughout my younger years, I never considered myself truly a member or devotee of any one particular Denomination. I was able to truly worship, bless, and be blessed in a vast variety of Denominations and traditions, in any church I attended, in fact, and I was asked to preach in more than a dozen different ones. But I found that if I declared my experience in other Denominations or experiences/traditions of the Church, I would inevitably be looked upon somewhat askance and suspiciously by those Christians to whom I was now speaking; by some, more than others! Indeed, by some Christians I was shown abject hatred and rejection, and quickly shown the door!

c) How living a life as a Christian among people affects one's own relationship with God! Here, this THIRD LEVEL came into stark reality!

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen?

21 And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

1 John 4:20-21 The BIBLE

5 Which say, Stand by thyself, come not near to me; for I am holier than thou. These are a smoke in My nose, a fire that burneth all the day.

6 Behold, it is written before Me: I will not keep silence, but will recompense, even recompense into their bosom,

7 Your iniquities, and the iniquities of your fathers together, saith the LORD, which have burned incense upon the mountains, and blasphemed Me upon the hills: therefore will I measure their former work into their bosom.

Isaiah 65:5-7 The BIBLE

Evidently, then, this requirement/demand that those in your church or Christian group follow a certain set of extraBiblical or unBiblical requirements in order to be holy and/or accepted by you, creates ani-

mosity, division, and hate between you and those not following your extraBiblical rules. The opposite of what Christ demands! And it has in fact separated between you and God!

This separation, then, between God and man, is caused, not by Denominationalism, but by the TRADITIONS AND CUSTOMS of each group!¹

- 1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,
- 2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
- 3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?
- 4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.
- 5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;
- 6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.
- 7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,
- 8 This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.
- 9 But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.
- 10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:
- 11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.
- 12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?
- 13 But He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.
- 14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

Matthew 15:1-14 The BIBLE

This requirement of extraBiblical or unBiblical traditions or customs can consist of either adding to Scripture, or ignoring Scripture. Changing Scripture accomplishes the same thing.

¹ And not only by the CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS, but also by the Doctrinal Beliefs of each group. (But this second is a matter for another message.)

- 11 For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you.
- 12 Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ.
- 13 Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?

1 Corinthians 1:11-13 The BIBLE

- 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified.

1 Corinthians 2:2 The BIBLE

And this is why, while I myself follow certain customs and practices that I feel aid my relationship with my God, I have always been so very reluctant to preach these or even share these with others, much less require them of anyone else! And, while I tend to follow these personal self-created aids to Godliness very closely, I try to always remember that they are merely self-created, and not in any way required by my Heavenly Father! And I can in no way question the Spirituality of those who do not follow the peculiar requirements that I demand of myself. My job is not to preach Churchianity, the following of a religious club's rules and regulations; my job is to preach Christ from Scripture, and His zealous pursuit!

"Sola Scriptura!" – ONLY Scripture!

2 Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish ought from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you.

Deuteronomy 4:2 The BIBLE

32 What thing soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

Deuteronomy 12:32 The BIBLE

5 Every Word of God Is pure: He Is a shield unto them that put their trust in Him.

6 Add thou not unto His Words, lest He reprove thee, and thou be found a liar.

Proverbs 30:5-6 The BIBLE

18 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this Book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this Book:

19 And if any man shall take away from the Words of the Book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this Book.

Revelation 22:18-19 The BIBLE

1 Then spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples,

2 Saying, The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat:

3 All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren.

9 And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, Which is in heaven.

10 Neither be ye called masters: for One Is your Master, even Christ.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

14 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

15 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

16 Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor!

17 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?
 18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.
 19 Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?
 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.
 21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.
 22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him That sitteth thereon.
 23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.
 24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.
 25 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.
 26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.
 27 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.
 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.
 29 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,
 30 And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.
 31 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.
 32 Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.
 33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?
 34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city:
 35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar.
 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.
 37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!
 38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.
 39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord.

Matthew 23:1-39 The BIBLE



Conclusion:

So is this matter of Customs and Traditions in the Church so important? We have seen that: Our own Customs and Traditions affect our relationships with other Christians. Our beliefs and practices affect the spirituality and Godliness of other people, their relationship with God. Our own Customs and Traditions' effects on others affect our own relationship with God. So, yes: our Customs and Traditions are central to our and others' walks with God! They can in fact determine whether we or others will see God at all!

So what is the key?

39 Search the Scriptures; for in Them ye think ye have eternal life: and They are They which testify of Me.

John 5:39 The BIBLE

25 The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.

Proverbs 29:25 The BIBLE

I invite you to read further, at: <http://Micaiah.com/clothes.htm>