

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

Introduction:

1. As we study and teach the Scriptures we are responsible for "*rightly dividing* [accurately handling] *the word of truth*" (2 Timothy 2:15).
2. We are examining several principles that will help us to fulfill this responsibility.
3. The Scriptures teach that we must:
 - a. consider all that the Bible teaches on a subject to know the truth (Psalm 119:160)
 - b. not participate in activities just because they seem right to us (Proverbs 14:12).
4. The theme for this lesson: Human traditions and commandments must be avoided.

Discussion:

- I. THIS PRINCIPLE IS ADDRESSED IN TITUS 1:13-14
 - A. In his teaching Titus was to help the people in Crete to "*be sound in the faith.*"
 - B. To accomplish this Titus was to teach the people in Crete not to give heed to the "*commandments of men.*"
 - C. Such commandments must be avoided because they turn people from the truth.
- II. THIS PRINCIPLE IS ILLUSTRATED IN MARK 7:1-13
 - A. (vs.1-5) Certain men found fault with the Lord's disciples.
 1. (vs.1) These men came to Jesus from Jerusalem [Jesus was in Galilee].
 - a. These men were:
 - 1) Pharisees: members of the strictest sect of the Jews
 - 2) scribes: copiers and teachers of the law.
 - b. The scribes and Pharisees often criticized Jesus (ex: Mark 2:15-16).
 - c. This was probably their purpose for coming to Jesus.
 2. (vs.2) On this occasion they found fault with the Lord's disciples.
 - a. They saw the disciples eat with "*defiled*" [unwashed] hands.
 - b. This does not mean that the disciples had not washed at all.
 - c. (vs.3-4) Mark explained what took place.
 - 1) These Jews followed a set of oral traditions that had been passed down for many years.
 - 2) One tradition said that the Jews could not eat a meal until they went through a ceremony of washing themselves.
 - 3) They also believed that their cooking vessels and tables had to be purified.
 - 4) (Leviticus 12-15) The Law of Moses taught the Jews to practice sanitation.
 - 5) However, this was a manmade tradition.
 3. (vs.5) They asked Jesus why His disciples did not follow their tradition.
 - B. (vs.6-8) Jesus answered the Pharisees and scribes.
 1. (vs.6) He applied the statement in Isaiah 29:13 to these men.
 2. (vs.7-8) He also said that their worship was "*vain*" and why it was vain.
 - C. (vs.9-13) Jesus pointed out the hypocrisy of these men.
 1. (vs.9) They actually considered their traditions to be more important than God's written commandments.
 2. (vs.10-12) Jesus illustrated their error.
 - a. (vs.10) Jesus quoted 2 commandments given in Exodus 20:12 and Exodus 21:17.
 - b. (vs.11-12) These men had developed a tradition which allowed them in their minds to be free from obeying these 2 commandments.
 - c. (vs.13) Unfortunately, this was just one example of many similar practices.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus went on to show what really defiles people (vs.14-16).
2. The Pharisees and scribes did not see anything wrong with their traditions and commandments because they were "blind."
3. We must beware lest we fall into the same trap as these men.