

26-1018p - Detailed Summary

26-1018p - *Traditions, Part 2, Mike Mathis*

Bible Reader: Mike Mathis

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Traditions, Part 2

Scripture Readings

Bible Reader: (0:04 - 0:55), Mike Mathis 2 Thessalonians 2:15; 3:6 Scripture reading read within the	Scripture Continued sermon
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Summary of Transcript (0:04 - 37:41), Preacher: Mike Mathis

(0:04–2:39) Opening Remarks and Introduction to the Topic of Traditions

Good evening to those present in the assembly and those listening on the line. Mike notes that he finished his lesson and sent it to Scott so it could be prepared and placed in the program, though he did not mention this detail in the morning service. He recounts that on Friday he was listening to the Gospel Broadcasting Network on YouTube, specifically a program called **Answering the Errors** available on GBN.org or GBNTV.org. In that lesson, drawn solely from the Bible, the speakers used a Greek or Latin phrase meaning “the Scriptures only” while discussing traditions. This connects directly to the morning Bible class, which also addressed traditions, and Mike explains that tonight’s sermon continues the subject begun that morning.

This morning the focus was on men’s traditions, particularly those of the Pharisees. Before proceeding further, Mike announces that he will read two passages from 2 Thessalonians to establish the biblical framework for the evening’s study.

(2:39–6:22) Apostolic Commands to Hold and Observe Traditions

Mike reads 2 Thessalonians 2:15: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or epistle.” He then turns to 2 Thessalonians 3:6: “that we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us.” He clarifies that “from us” refers to the apostles, including Paul.

Not all traditions are inherently bad, even those originating with men. The problem arises only when something alleged to come from God is in reality from man—that is, man-made. At the same time, not every tradition encountered in Scripture is of human origin. The text emphasizes that the believers “were taught” these traditions, either by spoken word or by epistle. Mike stresses the significance of the word “therefore” in 2 Thessalonians 2:15, explaining that whenever this term

appears, the reader must examine what precedes it in order to understand the context of the instruction that follows.

(6:22–11:07) The Context of Christ’s Coming and the Man of Sin

To establish that context, Mike briefly surveys the preceding material, beginning in 2 Thessalonians chapter 1. He notes that Paul speaks of the time when Christ appears, reading from verses 6 and 8: it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble the believers and to give rest to those who are troubled, when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Moving into chapter 2, Mike reads verses 1 through 14. Paul addresses the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ and the gathering of believers to Him, urging them not to be soon shaken in mind or troubled by spirit, word, or letter claiming that the day of Christ has already come. That day will not arrive unless the falling away comes first and the man of sin is revealed—the son of perdition—who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sits as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. Paul reminds the Thessalonians that he told them these things while still with them. The mystery of lawlessness is already at work, restrained until the restrainer is taken out of the way. Then the lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the breath of His mouth and destroy with the brightness of His coming. The coming of the lawless one is according to the working of Satan, with all power, signs, and lying wonders, and with all unrighteous deception among those who perish because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved. For this reason God will send them strong delusion so that they should believe the lie, and they will be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Paul expresses thanks to God always for the brethren, beloved by the Lord, because God from the beginning chose them for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and belief in the truth, by which He called them by the gospel for the obtaining of the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. Mike highlights that what precedes the command to hold the traditions is the working of the man of sin—the Devil, the son of perdition—who exalts himself above all that is called God or worshiped, sitting as God in the temple of God. This pattern of self-exaltation and departure is precisely what has occurred in history.

(11:07–16:06) Historical Departures and the Handing Down of Apostolic Traditions

Mike observes that after the first century, and continuing through the second and third centuries and beyond, departures from the truth recorded in the Scriptures became evident. In that early period the churches did not yet possess the complete written collection produced by the apostles and other inspired men. Traditions were handed down, yet these were grounded in what was written in the Scriptures. Paul, in particular, instructed churches to share letters with one another; for example, he directed that a letter written to one congregation be read by the church in Laodicea, and that the letter written to Laodicea be read by the first church, ensuring that the same teaching reached all the churches.

These are the traditions Paul set down. He commanded, “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle.” “Our epistle” encompasses the writings of the other apostles and inspired men who wrote by the inspiration of God—that is,

through the Holy Spirit. Mike references Paul's statement to Timothy that all Scripture is inspired, noting that the word "inspired" means God-breathed; it comes from God. The apostles handed these traditions down, and Mike returns to 2 Thessalonians 3:6, where Paul commands in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that the brethren withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition received from the apostles.

(16:07–20:30) The Apostolic Tradition of the Weekly Collection

Mike turns to specific traditions received from Paul and the other apostles. He cites Paul's instruction to the Corinthians that when they came together on the first day of the week they were to lay by and store as God had prospered them. Paul writes, "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also." The same command is given to both the Corinthian and Galatian churches: on the first day of the week each one is to lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, so that there will be no collections when Paul arrives. Thus the collection is to be taken on the first day of the week, and Paul is handing down a tradition that is to be followed by the church wherever it meets.

Mike recalls a previous discussion in which the subject of giving was raised and the question appeared whether believers could give away clothes, food, or furniture on other days. That is not the issue Paul addresses here. Paul is speaking of the collection of money, which could be taken and given to whoever needed help. Mike observes that in some denominational settings, during so-called revivals held any day of the week—including Monday through Saturday—a collection is taken. Scriptural practice, however, places the collection on the first day of the week.

(20:30–24:10) The Apostolic Tradition of the Weekly Lord's Supper

Mike next reads Acts 20:7: "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight." The meeting occurred on the first day of the week. Verse 6 notes that they sailed from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread and in five days joined the others at Troas, where they stayed seven days. While the phrase "breaking bread" can sometimes refer to an ordinary meal, Mike argues that if the gathering were merely for a common meal, there would have been no reason to wait until the first day of the week; such a meal could have been eaten any day. Because they waited for the first day and broke bread then, the act was the Lord's Supper.

People often ask how often the Supper is to be observed, citing the words "as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till he comes." The answer given in Scripture is "on the first day of the week." Every week has a first day, just as every week under the old covenant had a Sabbath—the seventh day—which was to be kept. Mike warns against the desire to change what has been delivered.

(24:10–28:06) Resisting Unauthorized Changes to Apostolic Practice

Mike mentions first hearing the term "change agents." At first he thought it referred to changing the order of worship. He later learned from an article that the concern was not the sequence of acts but the introduction of mechanical instruments into worship. Scripture directs believers to speak to one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in the heart to the Lord; the instrument is the heart. Singing without mechanical music, praying, partaking of the

Lord's Supper, and taking the collection may be done in any order. The problem arises when the substance of the practice itself is altered. With regard to the Lord's Supper, some object that weekly observance is too frequent. Mike replies that the same objection could be raised against the weekly collection, yet 1 Corinthians 16:2 places the laying by in store on the first day of the week so that the funds will be ready when needed and no special collection will be required upon arrival. Personal feelings that something "ought to be changed" are not the standard; the apostolic instruction is.

(28:06–33:19) Apostolic Authority, the Guidance of the Holy Spirit, and Worship in Spirit and Truth

Mike returns to 2 Thessalonians 3:6, where Paul commands the brethren in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. The command carries the authorization of Jesus. Those unwilling to follow the instruction received from the apostles are to be withdrawn from. Some claim the apostles got things wrong. Mike recalls that after His resurrection Jesus told the disciples He would return to the Father and send the Holy Spirit—the Helper, the Spirit of truth—who would guide them into all truth. If the apostles erred in what they taught and wrote, the implication for the Holy Spirit would be serious. It is the Holy Spirit who led these men both in handing down the traditions and in writing them. Mike turns to John 4:20–24, where Jesus speaks with the Samaritan woman. She notes that her fathers worshiped on that mountain while the Jews said Jerusalem was the place. Jesus replies that the hour is coming when neither on that mountain nor in Jerusalem will the Father be worshiped; she worships what she does not know, but salvation is of the Jews. The hour is coming and now is when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. Believers therefore need the right spirit and attitude and must act according to the truth. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit of truth, guided the apostles—including Paul—in what they were to hand down, and the church is to follow what comes from the Word.

(33:19–37:41) Conclusion: Holding Apostolic Traditions, Keeping the Faith, and the Gospel Invitation

In conclusion, following the system of faith means holding the traditions taught by the apostles. One may choose an unholy lifestyle, but that choice brings no lasting good. The call is to follow the faith and keep the faith—even when one feels alone. Mike then sets forth the teaching on how to be saved. Upon hearing the word, one is to believe and to repent of sins, turning away from them. Jesus said that whoever confesses Him before men, He will confess before His Father in heaven. One must also be baptized for the remission of sins. Some latch onto only one element, such as faith only. Yet faith leads to repentance, to confession that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and to baptism for the remission of sins. As Mark 16:15–16 declares, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved." Those who have entered salvation are to remain faithful to the end, continuing to follow Jesus and staying saved. If any depart from the faith, they are to return, let the church pray for them, come back to God, and allow Him to restore them. Anyone subject to the gospel invitation in any way is invited to come forth while the congregation stands and sings.