

OVERCOMING TRADITION

⁴² As they went out, the people begged that these things might be told them the next Sabbath. ⁴³ And after the meeting of the synagogue broke up, many Jews and devout converts to Judaism followed Paul and Barnabas, who, as they spoke with them, urged them to continue in the grace of God. ⁴⁴ The next Sabbath almost the whole city gathered to hear the word of the Lord. ⁴⁵ But when the Jews[a] saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. ⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” ⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region. ⁵⁰ But the Jews incited the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city, stirred up persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and drove them out of their district. ⁵¹ But they shook off the dust from their feet against them and went to Iconium. ⁵² And the disciples were filled with joy and with the Holy Spirit.

ACTS 13:42–52 ESV

Lord, guard my heart so that...

1. Routine in church does not replace my awe for Jesus

But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy and began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him.

ACTS 13:45 ESV

⁶ And he said to them, “Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, “This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; ⁷ in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’ ⁸ You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”

MARK 7:6–8 ESV

Lord, guard my heart so that...

2. Religion does not replace my transformation

The difference between empty tradition and a transformed life is seen in three areas:

PRAYER

Tradition says:

“I have to pray because that’s what a Christian is supposed to do.”

The Gospel says:

“I can draw near to my Father because I have a relationship with Him.”

REPENTANCE

Tradition:

Produces temporary guilt.

The Gospel:

Produces genuine transformation.

¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, ²⁰ that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus.

ACTS 3:19-20 ESV

GRACE

Tradition says:

“Because God forgives me, I can continue living the same way.”

But the Gospel says:

“Because God has forgiven me, now His grace transforms me.”

Lord, guard my heart so that...

3. Do not see the cross merely as an accessory, but as something you carry every day

“Cheap grace is the mortal enemy of our church. Our struggle today is for costly grace.”

-Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Cheap grace is that which offers:

1. Forgiveness without repentance.
2. Baptism without transformation.
3. Christianity without the cross.
4. Grace without obedience.

²³ And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

LUKE 9:23–24 ESV

Lord, guard my heart so that...

4. Comfort does not replace my discipleship

⁴⁶ And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, “It was necessary that the word of God be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it aside and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we are turning to the Gentiles. ⁴⁷ For so the Lord has commanded us, saying, “I have made you a light for the Gentiles, that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.” ⁴⁸ And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as many as were appointed to eternal life believed. ⁴⁹ And the word of the Lord was spreading throughout the whole region.

ACTS 13:46–49 ESV

The Holy Spirit breaks:

1. The pride that makes us believe we do not need to change.
2. The religious façade that appears alive, but lacks true power.
3. The comfort that keeps us consuming instead of obeying.
4. The traditions that replace a genuine relationship with Christ.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in[a] the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20 ESV

Today our prayer must be:
“Lord, guard my heart so that...”

1. Routine in church does not replace my awe for Jesus.
2. The cross is not something I admire, but something I carry.
3. Religion does not replace my transformation.
4. Comfort does not replace my discipleship.