

## "Blind Guides of the Blind"

*"And after He called the multitude to Him, He said to them, "Hear, and understand. "Not what enters into the mouth defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into the pit" (Matthew 15:10-14).*

The Pharisees had accused Jesus of not teaching His disciples to keep the traditions of the elders. Jesus' response was one of great wisdom. He told them that they were guilty of putting their traditions above the commandments of God and worshipping in vain. He went on to explain that it wasn't what you put into your mouth (food or drink) that defiled the man but what came out of it. It is what comes out of the heart (Matt. 15:18-20). It's a man's thoughts, words, and actions that will defile the man. The Pharisees were offended at this statement because they put great emphasis on looking godly and making sure that everyone else thought they were as well (Matt. 23:25-28). The traditions of the elders were not from God but from men. These things that the Pharisees were teaching would not stand. They would be rooted up because they were not of God. When someone who is blinded by his own doctrine teaches someone else that falsehood, he has led that individual into the dark. Both, being blinded, will fall into the pit because they cannot see the truth. Both are guilty, the teacher and the student.

A great responsibility is placed upon one who teaches God's word. It's no wonder James gave us such sobering words to heed. *"Let not many of you become teachers, my brethren, knowing that as such we shall incur a stricter judgment" (James 3:1).* James shows us that it is serious to take on such a responsibility. A teacher is responsible for himself and those he teaches. Paul gave this important instruction to Timothy. *"Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; persevere in these things; for as you do this you will insure salvation both for yourself and for those who hear you" (I Timothy 4:16).* I'm afraid that this command is not taken seriously today.

There is so much confusion in religion today that some people just don't know where to turn. You have 1500 or so groups to choose from, just in the United States. How overwhelming! Are the majority of these groups paying close attention to the doctrine or teaching of Christ? I don't believe that they are.

One of the things that people seem to be so caught up into today is tradition. This is the way we've always done it and it should not be questioned, is many people's attitude. This attitude is against the teaching of the Bible. John said not to believe every spirit, but *"test the spirits to see whether they are from God;*

*because many false prophets have gone out into the world" (I John 4:1).* How do we go about testing the spirits or putting the spirit of a teaching to the test? John continues by saying, *"We are from God; he who knows God listens to us; he who is not from God does not listen to us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error" (I John 4:6).* If we can prove it from the word of God (the spirit of truth) then we need to live it regardless of the cost or consequences. If it can't be proved by God's word (the spirit of error), it has no place in our lives or in our worship. Paul said to the Thessalonians *"Examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil" (I Thess. 5:21-22).* In his second letter to the Corinthians he said, *"Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith; examine yourselves! Or do you not recognize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail the test?" (13:5).* The way we worship God and the way we live should be questioned and corrected if need be. Man's traditions have no part in the life of those who want to live by the word. It was condemned by Jesus when He walked on this earth (Matt. 15:1-14) and it stands condemned today.

I'm afraid many people will be horrified in judgment when they find out what they had been led to believe was without foundation. Their beliefs and practices were not based on the authority of Christ (Col. 3:17). What we see in the scriptures is the story of redemption, God's plan for saving man. We find Christ and Him crucified. That's what it's all about! Just as the Pharisees were leading others astray, as well as themselves, so will people who follow man's wisdom instead of God's divine word. Make it a point not to be a blind follower. Study God's word and obey it with your eyes wide open.

- Shane Williams