

Matthew 21-03-07a

Good morning, welcome to the Sunday morning services at Grace and Truth Bible Church. It is a privilege to have each of you here and we're going to continue our study in the Gospel of Matthew. You can be turning to Matthew chapter 15.

We saw Thursday night that there is a very distinct connection between what's happening in our world today and the words of the Lord Jesus having to do with human traditions. You violate the commandment of God by your traditions. So this reminded me of something that we covered a couple of chapters ago and it's something we're going to take a look at this morning in connection with this by way of application.

We live in a very strange world and if you will turn with me back to Matthew chapter 15 and read our passage beginning in verse 7. Hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying, this people draw near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips but their heart is far from me and in vain they worship me teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. The scary thing about this is Jesus says they are quoting Isaiah which is God speaking and God says these people honor me and worship me. You can circle those words.

These people draw near to me and honor me in verse 8 and worship me in verse 9. Draw near, honor and worship. What do we expect that we are doing in this day and time when we come to church? We draw near, we try to honor the Lord and we want to worship him right? So this becomes a bit of a scary notion that people can believe they are honoring God, believe that we are worshiping God, believe that we are drawing near to God and we're not because consciously or unconsciously we are observing traditions that have little to nothing to do with the truth. Point of application.

It's we're only two minutes in and we have a point of application but we need to examine ourselves and see if we are in the faith or if we are in tradition. There are traditions that are made by others. There are traditions that have roots in the denominational past in the structures that have been formed by generations before us and as we saw last time there are also traditions that are brand new that have been started in recent days and in recent times and extend beyond just forms of worship and forms of assembly and forms of approach to God.

And it is easy to look around and say well these people are starting a new kind of education. I can remember when I was a child the new math came in. I don't know that anybody younger than me has heard of the new math but there used to be the old math and it was taught in a traditional fashion.

You learned addition by using your fingers. You learned the tens place and the hundreds place and the thousands place on numbers. I remember we had these great big cardboard charts and they had number man on them and he had hands and one of the

men was the single digits and so he had ten fingers and so you could move his little fingers.

They were just strips of paper and if you put six strips of paper up that was the number six and then the next man was tens man and so if tens man had two fingers up and ones man had six fingers up that was the number 26 and we built numbers on the decimal system based on concrete construction of numbers not abstractions. The new math came in and they said well addition is just one kind of operation. People that had gone through all kinds of advanced college math and university mathematics came back and said well we need to bring what we teach in the university down to kindergarten and first grade so they began to try to talk about functions and well you have a number and then you have a function and the function can be anything.

It might be addition. It might be subtraction. It might be a logarithm.

It might be sine or cosine or well nobody knows what sine, cosine and tangent are when you're in the first grade but they wanted to abstract it and try to teach the concept instead of building on a solid foundation of this is what number is. It's got this many tens and this many ones. Maybe it's got this many hundreds and this many tens and this many ones and we'll work with those and we'll memorize the multiplication table and we'll just learn that four times four is 16 and seven times nine is 63 and nine times nine is 81.

We'll just memorize that. Oh no that's just rote. That's not good.

We're going to teach functions and you don't have to memorize and it got very strange and bizarre very quickly and it came to the point where they had a pull string barbie that said math is hard and that created a firestorm because it was a girl saying math is hard and that was sexist and so on but these traditions and these ways of doing things man comes up with a better idea. Now this is the concept. Follow me here.

Man has an idea that is separate and distinct from a previously existing idea and so when you have two ideas the number two in greek is dia. Dia. So if you have diameter this is the meter across from one side to the other the two sides it's dia meter it goes it goes through from one side to the other and so through to go through from one side to the other is is the idea.

Well if you've got two ideas and you go back and forth from one idea to the other the greeks had a word for this called dia logismos. Logismos you can see logos and and logic in that idea this is the this is the logic and dia you're going back and forth from one view to another you're comparing them this is a debate this is a dispute it's a contention it is a contest if you will between these two points of view well the reason this is important to us is what jesus says in matthew chapter 15 verse 11 they've accused his disciples of eating with unwashed hands the context here is teaching his doctrines the traditions of

men people think they are honoring god think they are drawing near to god and think they are worshiping god in their traditions there has been a dialogue a dia logismos between the truth of god genuine approach to god genuine faith in god and relationship with god and a human alternative a humanly manufactured tradition got the context now right you've got a choice you can go the biblical route the faith route the truth route come to god god's way or you can come to god another way you can come to wisdom god's way in god's time or you can pick the fruit off the tree and god knows that in the day you eat thereof you will be wise understanding good and evil satan tells the woman which route do you want to knowledge do you want to go the obedient route or the disobedient route do you want to go the uh the way that god has ordained or do you want to dia logis oh my which is the verb form a dia logismos do you want to create another way based on reason it is rationalization it is parsing things out with human acumen then in in this same context jesus goes on to say it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a man but what comes out of the mouth this defiles a man look down at verse 16 are you also still without understanding do you not yet understand that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is eliminated that's a different kind of defilement but those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart they come from the heart they defile a man for out of the heart proceed and then you have these things that proceed look at this list evil thoughts murders adulteries fornications thefts false witness blasphemies these are the things that jesus lists looking at that list which one's the worst which one is going to get you the worst sentence if you were charged what's the worst one in the list we would say murder right what would be the second worst murder far and away you know you can you can be executed for murder what would you think blasphemy that's kind of a religious thing uh theft that's pretty bad but uh fornication that's that's impurity but uh adultery that's if you had a choice between adultery and fornication you say well adultery is fornication that also disrupts and breaks the covenant of somebody's marriage one or both people um are are violating a a pledge an oath i plight thee my truth so maybe of these beyond murder you might say well adultery or fornication and false witness kind of depends on the consequences if you bear false witness and you get someone executed for a crime they did not commit that might be pretty bad blasphemy well you know kind of depends uh people seem to blaspheme every day take the lord's name in vain and dismiss god as a fantasy and a myth what is the first one that jesus mentions what is the first one you would think well wouldn't murder be the worst and then he would go down the list to less important ones or maybe he would start with the less important and build up to the most important one last or maybe he would do it chiastically and have murder right in the middle but murder comes second to what dia logismo that's the first one where it says evil thoughts this is evil dia logismo evil debates evil contentions evil rationalizations it's first in the list why is it first in the list every other one of these in the list starts with this you don't murder someone until you decide even in the heat of passion we say well it was a crime of passion they weren't thinking straight they were emotional they were drunk they were this they were that but it still starts with a thought in some way shape

or from you say i have got to end this person they're in my way they've done me wrong they i there's an injustice here and i will write it by plunging in a knife pulling a trigger smashing their face into a pillow i'll do something and i will murder them i will take away their life they've done something so bad that this must be done but it starts with an evil thought adultery the grass is greener on the other side of the fence and there is a fence because one or both parties are married but just can't i will find a way to indulge myself we'll have gratification self-gratification mutual gratification mutual admiration outside the bounds of marriage and it is a crime against marriage adulteries fornication aberrant self-gratifying behavior in the physical realm thefts somebody has something i think i need more than they do i will take it they've got more than enough i don't have enough why should they have it and i don't uh why should i work for it and save up for it when i can just take it theft false witness if i tell the truth bad things might happen to me if i bear false witness i can get bad things to happen to somebody else blasphemies i will shake my fist at god i will denigrate god i will ascribe to god things that are not so i will claim that his word is full of contradictions that he's an angry god the richard dawkins screed about his horrible attributes and making him out to be a foot stomping little child and so on that's blasphemy these are the things which defile a man but they start with evil now this is a really interesting word and it goes back to teaching as doctrines the traditions of men why would anybody do this they have dialogued their way into it used to be a commercial on tv years ago ford has a better idea a little light bulb would come on ford has a better idea well man has a better idea i can improve on god instead of speaking to the rock i can strike the rock and so on instead of just shaming the prophets of baal i can murder them instead of just dismissing the teaching of this prophet we can kill him instead of pointing out where we see someone not comporting with prophecy we can character assassinate him and so on well where does this lead us if you look at the word of god and its use of this word in the new testament we find it in the verb form and in the noun form and interestingly there are times when it is okay to consider two different points of view and this is the verb form *dia logizomai* now i've told you i've mentioned this before when you have the *omai* ending on a verb in greek it's as in this case *logizomai* is to reason *dia logizomai* is to debate two different points of view and most of the time as soon as you start debating two points of view and you come up with the noun form a *dia logizomos* your conclusion as a result of reasoning turns out to be wrong so it's very curious thing if you do a word study and i haven't inflicted too many word studies on you lately so i thought it was overdue but i'm just going to summarize here and say there are legitimate cases of the verb the *omai* ending often suggests that it's reflexive this is something that we do in our own interest to or for ourselves it's got this reflexive idea it's it's kind of like the middle voice an active voice i hit the ball and there's a verb and a direct object passive voice uh i was hit by the ball and the subject receives the action of the verb instead of inflicting the verb on something else that's the passive voice uh god i was saved by god and you usually have a prepositional phrase or something and indicate how this thing happened um but the middle voice in greek is in between active and passive and it often means this involves me in

some way i do this to or for myself i receive the benefit of the action even as i do it to an external object in some way i have an interest the subject has an interest in verb and its outcome and so it's often reflexive so dia logiz omai means i'm logiz oing i'm thinking i'm using logic and i'm considering two different possibilities or i'm i'm working through an issue dia means through primarily i think i said it means two before but uh the the the two words are related you go through a thing and sometimes you divide it into two or you go from one place to another and there's a uh departing point and a destination but this idea of of moving from one thing to another is inherent in it so dia logiz omai i'm considering i'm working through this issue and trying to figure out do i want conclusion a or conclusion b do i want the doctrine of god or do i want the tradition of men doctrine of god or tradition of men judgment of men conclusion of man god's righteousness or man's righteousness am i going to reason my way out of what faith tells me or am i going to operate in faith and the reason the verb form can be used in a positive sense for example uh let's take a look at some of these dia logiz omai in luke chapter 1 verse 29 uh when gabriel appears to mary and she sees him she's troubled at his saying hail mary full of grace you know idea uh luke 129 she saw him she was troubled at his saying and dia logiz omaid what manner of greeting this was she's this is completely unexpected you don't see an angel and here's an angel and he gives her this greeting and this blessing from god and she says is this a good thing or a bad thing and because of gabriel's representation mary goes on to respond in faith let it meet be to me according to your word the same gabriel appears to zachariah in the temple talking to him about his son john who's going to be the forerunner and zachariah dia logiz moiz in his dia logiz omaiz in his mind and because of that he ends up being struck dumb because he starts working his logic instead of using his faith gabriel comes to two individuals one of them dialogues his way into rebuke the other faiths her way into approval it is okay to consider a matter but our consideration should lead us to the conclusion of faith not of reason so you find the verb form of this occasionally often it is it is negative just like the noun which is always negative in the new testament when you find the dia logiz moiz noun it's always negative the verb in the case of mary she dialogues in her mind briefly but then she says i'm going to trust god so the next time you find this verb uh you find the people in luke chapter 3 verse 15 the people were in expectation and they reasoned in their hearts about john the baptist whether he was the christ or not says luke chapter 3 verse 15 can this man be the christ it's a fair question so he's is he the christ or is he not the christ and he clarifies for them you know there's one coming after me who's mightier than i whose uh sandals i'm not worthy to unloose you can tell this is a country church so uh it's it's okay for the people to reason in their hearts about john whether he's the christ or not but once john says i am not the christ there is one coming after me that is a conclusion of faith right if you try to make him out to be the messenger if you remain a disciple of john after he has already pointed out the messiah then you have dialogued your way into error you have created a human truth a human tradition and this is what jesus is condemning in our chapter what is the pertinence what is the application here we have a lot of people offering us ideas about what is right and what is wrong what is

acceptable and what is unacceptable it is okay to work through and use our logic to analyze and to consider and to gather facts is this a valid flaw in society that needs fixing is our national policy about this or about that right or wrong there is nothing we are not unreasonable we are not blind we are not unmental we are not unintellectual or anti-intellectual but the conclusion that we draw as we consider ideas propositions policies candidates positions and so on should always come down on what reflects faith what reflects the doctrine of god and not the tradition of men so our process of dialogues oh my should be aimed at that distinction i need to look at this closely tradition the thing about it is we just take it for granted this is the way we've always done it maybe the old math is not that good maybe the new math is a better way i should look at it carefully and see does this partake of the kind of discipline and hard work and self-control that the word of god requires or is it a fabrication of the rationalizing of man and it doesn't bear fruit it doesn't end up with something constructive and god glorifying you can look at the old mcguffey readers you can look at the old ways of educating where when you taught someone the abcs and you have you know a is for adam and b is for boy and and so on and many of the letters alluded to bible stories and to scriptural facts that were a part of people's home life and upbringing and what they would get read to them at night and was a part of the fabric of society and there was an integrated approach to science and language and the arts that reflected a christian heritage and christian familiarity even if you chose not to in christ you were not hostile and not didn't harbor animus against the bible and the things of god and understood that there was a moral foundation reflected there and even if you didn't think it was necessarily true or jesus was necessarily the son of god and that the miracles were fabulous uh the moral truths still appealed and were recognized as foundational and as structural for the nation uh there were people and always have been people in this country who saw the bible as sort of a another version of aesop's fables or uh the uncle remus tales or whatever where yeah the story itself is not true brer rabbit is not necessarily true uh but the idea that it communicates the moral of the story is sound so we think we are thinking people but we're going to get in trouble if our thoughts are justified by reason instead of justified by faith we are justified in the righteousness sense by faith and our positions our thinking what we support what we encourage what we discourage what we applaud and what we decry is justified by whether it is coming from a heart of faith or a heart of reasoning so it's okay for mary to pause and consider and be a bit wary of this innovation in her life where someone is coming and telling her these messages purporting to be from god but her faith kicks in and she affirms and she believes and she acts accordingly the people who listen to john the baptist dialogue in their hearts about john whether he is the christ or not some of them are going to believe john when he says i am not the christ and when john points out the christ they are going to follow the christ and some of these men are going to be jesus disciples others are going to remain disciples of john and miss the opportunity because they conclude they reason that they should stick with john the baptist and it's an incorrect conclusion he must increase i must decrease john said well why are you a follower of the one that god says needs to decrease and be out of the way he is pointing

the way same thing happens in modern christianity where you make too much of an issue of christ and not enough of an issue of the father jesus himself said very similarly to john the baptist said i am the way to the father my flesh was rent like the veil to give access to the father you come to the father by me you don't stop at christ any more than you would stop at john the baptist so this word is really important why does jesus put it first in the list out of the heart proceed these are what defile a man what defiles a man the most even more than murder if this list is anything like a hierarchical list where does defilement begin evil rationalizations evil constructions that are not sourced in faith it is okay to dialogue in our hearts and to reason and to use our intellect and to think gather facts and draw conclusions but if our conclusions do not reflect faith if they are the product only of logic and only of human reason they become human traditions and we think that we are drawing near to god we think that we are honoring god and we think that we are worshiping god in what we do well you know i support this ministry and i write them a check you know i i tune into this service or i attend this church or i i follow this radio broadcast or i listen to this blog or i i debate in forums or i i engage in this particular activity that's related to god and christ and the bible in some way and that is my righteousness i'm associated yeah i run into people almost every week that are associated with the church and the church is doing things that they consider to be great and righteous and godly and meaningful and impactful and because the church is having an impact and i go to the church i am therefore meaningful and impactful and the righteousness and the glory of it rubs off on me well is this biblical is supporting a thing that is good the same as being good we can reason our way into thinking that we are drawing near honoring and worshiping when we are not if our life is not sourced in faith if our conclusions and therefore our actions notice the first thing is the intentions of the heart evil rationalizations i've got to debate my soul and i come down on well this makes sense other people say this makes sense so this is what i'm going to do if it is not sourced in faith whatever is not of faith is sin whatever is not of faith is evil evil dialogues so it's okay to use our intellect jesus tells the these are just examples in the gospel of luke you can look as our concluding thought here in luke 5 21 and 22 when jesus says to the man let down through the roof son your sins are forgiven you the scribes and pharisees began to deal with this is luke 5 21 scribes and pharisees when they hear jesus say your sins are forgiven you they they begin to reason saying who is this who speaks blasphemies who can forgive sins but god alone and because there is no faith to recognize that jesus is from god and is speaking on behalf of god and reflecting the truth of god jesus perceived their dialogues am i and he answered and said to them why are you denying in your hearts which is easier to say your sins are forgiven you or rise take up your bed and walk so that you may know that the son of man has authority on earth to forgive sins up the man stands and walks out carrying his bed remember that but the pharisees see a work of god see the son of god hear the words of god and their dialogue says this can't be right my tradition says that's wrong my tradition says only god can forgive sin well there's a there's truth in that but you're misapplying the truth what you should say is if only god can forgive sin and this man's sin is being forgiven god is at

work right here someone is speaking on god's behalf and i'd better pay attention if i purport to be a person of god and a man of god i should pay attention when the work of god is being done the words of god are being spoken i should be listening and responding in a faith manner not deal agides am i in my way into being a pharisee jesus perceived what they were thinking and said why are you doing this evil reasoning in your heart instead of sourcing your conclusion in faith without faith it is impossible to please him hebrews 11 6 he that comes to god draw near honor and worship can't do it by tradition have to do it by faith so what is our first conclusion this morning when we examine ourselves to see if we are in the faith that examination should focus on is the source of my thinking the source of my conclusions whether they are social political cultural relational the people near me the conversations i have with friends and relatives and co-workers and fellow students or whoever it may be uh is the source of what i express and what i embrace and what i found my life on faith or deal agies moss have i think my way into evil you look around today and many many many people have and many of them are believers many others think they are believers but the source of their conclusions the source of what they consider righteousness the source of what they consider good is not faith it is not the truth of god it is not the doctrine of god it is the tradition of man the perception of man the rationalization of man well we want to uh it's easy to see the reason jesus told parables the reasons we have narratives in the bible it's easy to see these things in the lives of others having observed that principle when we go to our quiet time and our devotional and our prayer that is the time to turn that laser like perception on ourselves am i assuming that there is good in my life and that i am drawing near and honoring and worshiping god thereby when in fact it is something of my own manufacture instead of bringing the blood sacrifice of abel i am bringing the tossed salad of cane because it seemeth good in my own sight faith has to be the source without faith it is impossible to please him well we'll pause there and take our break when we come back after our wonderful special music we're going to move forward in matthew chapter 15 and see this reflection of turning point in the reception or the attention of the people of israel to the message of the lord jesus we'll see that moving further forward after the break