

Reading: Mark 7:1-13

***“Is not My word like fire, asks the Lord,
and like hammer that breaks the rocks in pieces?” (Jer 23:29)***

New revelations, visions, dreams — these are the fad in Christendom today. Though superficially these appear good, these are nothing but “wood, hay and straw.” These cannot stand the test of the fire of God’s Word “The fire will test each one’s work, of what sort it is” (1 Cor 3:12,13). People are excited when preachers talk about dreams and visions. Huge crowds rush to such meetings. But dreams and visions are simply “chaff” before the “wheat” of God’s Word. Perhaps no other mortal man had had such an abundance of visions and revelations like Paul. He even had a trip to Paradise. But he did not go place to place talking about these experiences. Our preachers go crowing about even a visit to Paris!

Jesus was reasonably thorough with the Scriptures even from the age of twelve (Lk 2:42,46,47). But He prepared Himself for another eighteen years before He preached His first sermon. Many enter the pulpit too soon quoting Paul that he started preaching “immediately” after his conversion. Little do they realise that he had had many years of rigorous learning of the Old Testament Scriptures under the exacting eye of Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 22:3). That’s why Paul discouraged Timothy against installing a novice in the ministry (1 Tim 3:6).

Sometimes we are not able to embrace the truth of God’s Word because of certain traditions. Traditions are not to be summarily rejected. But whichever contradicts the Scriptures must be abandoned however long it would have been cherished. When we worship traditions we make the Word of God ineffective (Mk 7:6-13).

“The time will come when people will not endure sound doctrine... and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to tales” (2 Tim 4:3,4). The prosperity doctrine invented by materialistic countries is an example of myths. It is a plague that cannot be easily stopped. No other doctrine in Church history had been so popular. This has prevented most of our pulpits from sounding forth genuine messages from the Lord. *“Smile! Jesus loves you!”* — Such slogans are good for stickers but not good enough for sinners. It becomes a myth if the other side of the coin, namely *“Repent! Jesus loves you!”* is not presented (Rev 3:19).

*We must comfort the afflicted but afflict the comfortable.
Preaching should aim at pricking the heart, not stroking the skin!*

Almighty God, the Creator of the Universe by Your Word,

We worship You for creating light by the Word You spoke. We worship You for creating the firmament by the Word You spoke. We worship You for creating the earth and the seas by the Word You spoke. We worship You for creating the plants and trees by the Word You spoke. We worship You for creating the sun and the moon and the stars by the Word You spoke. We worship You for creating the birds and the creatures by the Word You spoke. We worship You for creating the animals by the Word You spoke. This power of Your Word has never changed. Help us to constantly keep this truth in our mind.

Thank You, Father, for Your Son whom You sent as the Incarnate Word. Thank You, O God, for the Bible You have given us as Your inspired Word. It humbles us to realize that You have entrusted us with the lofty task of proclaiming Your Word to all mankind. Your Word is eternal and unchanging. Forgive us, Lord, for diluting and adulterating and twisting it according to our taste and convenience.

Help us, O Father God, to faithfully proclaim Your Word which reveals Your eternal purposes. Help us to faithfully preach Your Word which testifies of Your Son. Help us to faithfully teach Your Word which reveals to us the mind of Your Spirit. Help us to handle Your Word diligently and reverentially, whether it's personal sharing or pulpit preaching. Increase our faith on the power of Your Word. Deepen our commitment to obey Your every Word, as it is eternal.

Father God, You have promised that when the enemy comes in like a flood, Your Spirit would raise up a banner against him. Help us, O God, to raise a voice against all false doctrines which dash against the Church. Let us not preach to please men but please You. Fill us afresh, O Lord, with the Spirit of Jesus who boldly spoke against the meaningless and unscriptural traditions of His day. As the Truth Himself, He preached the truth and nothing but the truth.

Send us, O Lord, another Martin Luther, another William Tyndale, another John Wycliffe, and scores of such Reformers to stop the hell-bound trend of modern Christianity! In Jesus' Name, we pray! Amen!

(Jn 1:1-3; Gen 1; Jn 1:14; 2 Pet 1:20,21; 2 Tim 3:16,17; Mt 28:19,20; 24:35; Jn 5:39; 6:68; Rev 19:10; Jer 23:29; Isa 59:19; 1 Thess 2:4; Mt 15:1-9; Mk 7:1-13)