

## Traditions of Men and Obedience 2 of 2

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The second example is John 2:1-12

On the third day there was a wedding at Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there; and both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. When the wine was all gone, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no more wine." Jesus said to her, "Woman, what is that to you and to Me? My time has not yet come." His mother said

to the servants, "Whatever He says to you, do it."

Let's analyze this for a minute. Jesus and Mary went to a wedding at Cana. During the celebration, they ran out of wine at a very embarrassing time. Let's ask ourselves: did Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, the living God... Did Jesus have knowledge that the wine had run out? I believe He knew full well the wine ran out. And in fact, planned it to illustrate a point.

But let's just say that He was so caught up in the doings that He didn't know. (But secretly, I agree with you, of course. He is God!) So, Mary felt the need to inform Him. Or was her motive in telling Him something different?? She knew He was God and lived with Him for 33 years and saw His private miracles during all those years. I believe she was actually petitioning Him. You know, if you can't get a man to do something... talk to his wife. Or talk to his mother: that's the game changer.

So, she said, "Son, they have run out of wine." and His answer... "What is that to Me, My time has not yet come." Mary addressed the servants...almost to say, "I don't care how ridiculous His request is, just DO IT." Then He turns around and addresses the servants.

How did she know that Jesus would provide the wine? She's His mother! She knows Him better than anyone else. So, let's look at this. Why did Jesus arrange this event in the Gospels; what was the point? Have you ever heard a Baptist preacher say, "Well, look here! Mary's role is as an intercessor. Jesus wouldn't do it on His own, but when she intervened, He did it! Wow, that lady's got clout."

Well, some of you may say, "What has that to do with today? Mary's in Heaven." Yes, she is in Heaven and so is the Holy Spirit permeating Heaven. And when you go to Heaven, there is no need for words, because everyone already knows what you are thinking, instantaneously.

So, is the Holy Spirit on Earth, too?? Of course. So, when someone says, "Mary, pray for us." does that resound in her heart... "Oh, he's asking for my prayers..."

Guys, Heaven and Earth are united through the Holy Spirit. There's only one Head, Jesus Christ. Therefore, there is only One Body. That means the believers in Heaven and the believers on Earth are One Body.

Jesus said that if we are faithful to our mission on Earth, in Heaven we will be given even more to do. He promised us a crown. So, it stands to reason that Mary has been given a role in Heaven, the role of praying for those on Earth.

The Great Cloud of Witnesses cheering us on... they are doing what Jesus is doing. And what is Jesus doing? Making intercession. Have you ever heard that in a Baptist or Evangelical church??? No, you haven't. Because their tradition is to minimize Mary to just a womb, and a victim of circumstances.

It's all denied with such foolish excuses as: "They can't pray for us in Heaven!" Okay. Well tell me, where does it say that in the Scriptures???

Or: "We only have one intercessor, Jesus Christ." Oh really? How many times have you called your friends to pray for you?

Or my personal favorite: "They can't hear you in Heaven!" That contradicts the Scriptures. The Great Cloud is looking in on us. The angels, the Cloud, all are working for Christ. All our taken up with saving souls. So, of course they can hear us! And of course, they are going to pray!

In the third example, Jesus is dying on the cross. At His holy feet stand His mother and the Apostle John. There is much tradition to support John's active role in her life. But Jesus is dying. He speaks to His mother and John—not about forgiving the Pharisees. Not about finding Peter and the rest of the Apostles. Not about the meaning of the veil being torn in the Temple. Not about the Centurion's conversion...

Rather, in public view, He makes an act that on the surface just sounds sentimental, "Mother, behold your son. Son, behold your mother."

Do you really think for one moment that John had to be told to take care of Mary??? Do you think that Mary had to be told to be a mother to John?? This is a full-grown man!

Yet, why in the world is Jesus pointing this out to the whole world at the most profound moment of His life?

Very simply. I believe that John represented the Body of Christ, the Church, at the crucifixion. He was the only Apostle there. And Mary had a key role that she had to stay on Earth to fulfill—fleshing out the life of Jesus for the written word, praying for the shell-shocked Apostles and reassuring them that He is the Messiah and is returning. And being a very holy, prophetic presence in the Early Church around whom all the Apostles gathered.

She carried in her person all the secrets of His incarnation, all the life events and miracles. She made the supreme offering of her Son on the Cross—for her heart and whole life purpose was to support Him in what He was doing.

Isn't that what mothers do?

Have you ever heard a Pentecostal preacher say anything about the role of Mary on Earth or in Heaven as a Mother?

Tradition has it that she was taken up bodily into Heaven. She was raptured before us as an example of what will happen to the faithful Believer. We will be taken up from the grave into Heaven. She was the first fruits of His ministry, a prophet, an apostle, and a teacher. And an exemplary first Believer.

She was granted the grace of baptism at her conception, so her womb would not carry the stain of sin, which would later be washed away by John the Baptizer for others, at the river Jordan. So, baptism erases the stain of Original Sin. She was given that grace, because Jesus could not inhabit a body stained by sin. And she must have remained faithful to that, and NOT sinned, because Jesus took form in her body from her blood. If she had sinned, He would not have been able to do that.

Have you ever heard this in a Brethren or Church of God?

Why not???

I believe you have never heard these Scriptures and their full meaning, because they were suppressed by men who made their own doctrine. And it became tradition. The traditions of men ignore these signal Scriptures pointing to the significance of Mary for all time. The traditions of men have made their own rules and ignored God's mandates.

So, let's return to Obedience.

I examine everything through the eyes of Truth, Justice and Holiness. I want those who join us to have the liberty God gave them at birth. And I never want to insert myself between God and a soul. Rather, I want their relationship to be deeply united with Christ. That's what I teach on this channel, and that's what I live in this Rule of Life.

But someone has to maintain the purpose, continuity, and direction for the Community that is under God's authority. And that falls to me, because He has appointed and equipped me to do that. As much as I hate the word "obedience", I am now in my latter years coming to understand that it does serve a purpose. I am seeing it lived out before my very eyes with this sweet group of people.

Let me put it this way. When you see a group of people, or a leader, doing exactly what you would like to do with your life, you want to know how they do it. Obviously, they are succeeding and know the way ahead of them.

When you decide to join such a group, you join it because it is living your dream.

What I am saying is that, as you become a part of this group or any group, you need to make a decision to lay down your own ways, your own wisdom, and learn from this person how God is directing their life.

If you come into a group with your own agenda, your own way, and an independent unteachable spirit, you are not going to last long. You want what God is doing in their life, but you don't want to take instruction, follow directions, or suggestions. You come with your own ideas and ways of doing things, which you are not willing to change in order to become a Living Stone, or a part of this Body that is focused on a life that you've dreamt of having.

So, you do things you know the leader would not approve of behind their back—and you hide them. What happens is that the continuity of the group falls apart, because you are injecting opposition into its midst and perhaps causing others to sin, as well. I have to say, if you want to be a part of something, if God calls and confirms to you that He wants you to be a part of it, you are being led there. Because you will learn what you need to learn to reach your highest goals in life... if you lay down the purse of your own opinions, that is.

Bringing your own wisdom, sometimes gleaned from sources that are in error and even contradict the Scriptures... bringing your own thinking that contradicts what God has given to this group, is counterproductive for you. You will never learn that way.

I have to say that Pride is at the root of this. And I should know! Because I have a lot of pride that God has been chipping away at. Pride says, "I know a better way." Pride says, "You don't need to listen to her; she's just a woman." Pride also says, "You are much more qualified than she is."

And I have to tell you: you may be 100% right. Because I don't know a lot, I am not educated, I have no degrees. I have only the Holy Spirit leading me. And you see, when God appoints a husband over a family, or a leader over a group, or a pastor over a church—along with that comes the anointing and a supernatural equipping to do that job.

In other words, Holy Spirit plants in your heart and mind the way you should do things and how to tell others to do them. That doesn't mean you are a dictator, or you know it all. It only means that the wisdom you get is supernatural and does not depend on your earthly qualifications—or lack thereof.

What God appoints, God anoints.

When I was much younger, and still now from time to time, I will get on this silly jag of second guessing and scrutinizing my husband's decision.

“Second guess is defined as: question a decision or action... An example of second guess is when you make a decision and then you start to think about it a little more and decide another decision might have been better. Second guessing yourself is a form of insecurity that so many people experience when thinking about, about whether they've made the best choice or not. This sort of insecurity stems from an inability to be sure about one's decisions, whether or not you have the necessary knowledge to make the correct decision.”

Okay. That's a quote.

When the shepherd asks someone to do something out of obedience, and it was the wrong thing for them to do, because the shepherd made an error in discernment... the obedient soul is still blessed for obeying. But the shepherd is gently corrected.

Second guessing in a Community means you don't trust the leadership. You want to make sure they are doing what God wants them to do, that they are leading by God and not their own personal interest or agenda. If you don't trust the leader of that Community—you shouldn't become a part of it. You will constantly be undermining their decisions, constantly thinking there's a better way, constantly resisting doing what everyone else is doing. You'll be sowing Division and Mistrust.

Better not to join than to do this.

And finally, I want to say that I have seen what the Lord does to those who are doing things behind my back, that are worldly and injurious to others. Things that are from the carnal nature. Things that are justified by a fiercely independent spirit that wants to do things its way.

I just recently found out that one of our beloved members was doing several things that I would never have approved of. And exposing others to it.

He is a sparkling, beautiful individual that you would never guess was being sneaky or underhanded. \Everyone loved him and still does. And everyone thought the very best of him.

But things came to my attention later that were not only against the Gospel, but also against my wishes.

Dear ones, Obedience is not obedience to just what is spoken. Obedience means you do not do things that your conscience tells you the shepherd would not approve of. Obedience and integrity, honesty and faithfulness to God, all go together.

I am not saying you have to be perfect. Far be it from me to say something I cannot live up to!  
But I am saying you have to have the desire to be perfect.

As a Community, we all need to watch out for one another and what the devils might do to cause a problem. Just recently I found out a neighbor bought one of our workers a quart of vodka, in payment for taking care of her dog while she was out of town. This particular worker is not here for the Community, but to graciously give his time and talent to building the hermitages. He is a wonderful worker, and I deeply appreciate him. But because he is actually living on the Refuge, what he does has an impact on others who have come here to commit their lives to a deeper walk with the Lord. And some come from drug backgrounds, and don't want to go back there. So, it can be a real source of temptation when something like that happens.

It was very strange that one of our people, Ezekiel noticed, reeked of alcohol. I never noticed it, but Ezekiel—whose father was an abusive alcoholic—picked up on it. And I thought to myself, 'Well, perhaps this person, who is leaving, has had some alcohol to dull the pain of separation. And since they were leaving, I did not address it. This may be why the Lord later told me in this message, "You have to stay on top of things and not allow any compromise."

Well my dear ones, I am very saddened, because the Lord called one of us out, and I wonder if He did that for the welfare of the community. Some souls have a strong independent spirit and are not willing to lay down the purse of their own opinion. Or give up old ways that don't really fit in with this lifestyle.

Honoring the shepherd God has assigned to you, to one who has been given the care of your soul, means this: you will reach your greatest potential as a human being by faithfully following what is asked of you, and never doing anything your conscience tells you would be against that shepherd's will. If you follow these guidelines, truly you can expect to be formed into the beautiful creature God created you to be. At least for the time being, while you're IN that location, God brought you there to learn something. And if you're in Obedience and you're laid down, loving the Lord Jesus. Laying down your own agenda. Then you'll get the most out of the experience that you can get, for your holiness and for your walk with the Lord. And eventually, you will come into your fullness and no longer will you need to struggle, because now you've been taught how to fly.

One who resists legitimate, loving, and only necessary Obedience, is compromising their own future and walk with the Lord. They may drift from place to place, never really forming a deep relationship, or deep friendships or Community relationships. Or never becoming the fullness of who they were meant to be. Sometimes we have to be in a Community in order to blossom. We need the support of the ones around us. We need the direction. We need the love and the caring of a Community. When people are solitary, they don't have that. They don't get it. They have to draw everything from God. And that's a wonderful thing—if God appoints that kind of lifestyle for a time and a season. That, of course, is the best thing you can do!

But having a Community gives you so much more. And to live in a Community, we have to learn to get along with what's asked of us, or what's implied, even. When you don't relinquish your own will to God, and follow the shepherd He appointed, then you end up wandering in the wilderness. And I ought to know, because I was one of those that wandered in the wilderness for 33 years! And then I wandered some more after that... Hm. I've done a lot of that.

God sees our hearts, dear ones. He longs to rescue us from ourselves, and all He asks for is cooperation. When the Lord sees a soul set on walking the fence—that's what we call it with our sheep. When they always are looking at the grass on the other side of the fence. When the Lord sees a soul set on walking the fence, He often times opens the gate so they can experience the freedom from constraints they seem to be longing for.

In other words, the Lord removes us from the sheepfold so we can experience our own will and its freedom.

There are some, and I could be there tomorrow, who just can't lay down their own opinions and will. So, they wander from place to place. Because to become a part of something, we have to conform our hearts to what God is doing in that place. Mind you, that is only if you know you are called there; if you get confirmation after confirmation, and you are settled in your heart: God has called me here. Then the next challenge is, "Lord, what must I lay down to make room for the new thing You are doing in my soul?"

So, I am not telling you this to condemn anyone, but to recognize that God is serious about a consecrated life. And He disciplines those whom He loves to purify and prepare them for greater things.

"It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Hebrews 10:31

And if you truly are yearning for perfection and union with God, He will take you up on it and patiently work with you until He completes what He started. But if you say one thing and believe another, compromising and adhering to worldly ways when you know they should be laid down. Or stubbornly opposing the shepherd. That is presumption. And sooner or later, it will force you to make a decision.

So, I ask you dear ones, be true to yourself and to your God. He understands weakness in the face of temptation. But He will tolerate double-mindedness for only so long, and then He will act to correct it.

Lord, is there anything You want to say? (It took me a while to hear Him...)

He began, *"My precious Clare, I know how it hurts when a soul leaves, and everyone feels the loss. But for the sake of the purity of your vocation and calling, including others that follow, sometimes it has to be done."*

*"Do not be so easily affected by the outer demeanor of the person. Pay much more attention to the warning signs, and love them anyway, because in a very little time they will be going elsewhere."*

We've noticed that. And Ezekiel has been in Community before, and he's noticed it. And his spiritual Director told him, "You don't have to ask someone to leave. They, of their own accord, leave."

*"And you, My Bride," Jesus continues. "Must be stricter and not allow compromise. There are many souls who are walking the fence. They want the world's securities and holiness at the same time. They fool themselves into thinking what they know is not My expressed will, by rationalizations and long justifications.*

*"You, too, have done this, Clare. You are not free of duplicity, but at least you recognize it and are working for a change. And you have made great progress."*

Thanks to You, Lord.

*"My people, the more you abandon your own will, your own opinion, your own agenda—even the agendas of securing your future just in case... Or trying to make money to give away to the poor, when you know that's not your calling. The more you are willing to fly only by Providence and renounce the world, the more wonderfully shall I provide for you to become undivided, yearning for holiness, and living in Me.*

*"The more you hold aside for yourself, feeling you must take care of you, the less I can fill and use you. The offering is great."*

*"The Kingdom of the Heavens is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls; and having found one pearl of great value, he went and sold all everything else and bought it." Matthew 13:45-46*

*"And that's the way My Kingdom is. If you are called to My Kingdom, sooner or later you'll be asked to give up everything to follow Me.*

*"So, I bless you, My People, with My love. Perseverance. And Discernment. So that you can make the right decisions with your life. Knowing that your flesh will always seek for itself, but it fights against the spirit. And makes it harder for you to rise spiritually, and become the soul that you were created to be.*

*"So, go forward now with the assurance that as you give up all that pertains to the World, you make room for Me to fill you with all that pertains to Heaven."*