

## Tradition or Truth? (Part 6)

Tradition - what man says - has a tendency to create "conformative" communities - people who think and look and act like one another. Truth - what God says - creates "transformative" communities - people who think and look and act like the Truth Himself. Transformation is always by God's "say so", not man's.

This seems to be simply and powerfully illustrated in Jesus' inaugural miracle at the Cana wedding feast. (Jo 2:1-11) He transforms one common, everyday substance - water - into something altogether uncommon and unique - the very best wine. (He did not turn water into better water!)

Jesus' mother Mary gets to be the "preacher" in this story and she does so with a seven word sermon, "Whatever He says to you, do it." (Jo 2:5) One of the very first implications - unspoken but clearly expressed - is this: When the "wine" runs out, it's time to listen! (Ps 46:10-11; Ro 10:17) Need is often the soil of revelation (Ja 1:2-4), so when we are running out of... patience? love? wisdom?... be careful about talking too much and be ready to listen.

Let's break it down:

1) "Whatever" - It's liable to be strange, unnerving, contrary to our logic or tradition! We are to present ourselves to God in a non-selective readiness to be told the Truth. Transformation is always on God's terms. A God who is reasonable, explainable, predictable... rarely transforms anything. The "whatever" requires humility on our part - only the humble walk with God. It calls for us to lay down our traditions, pre-conceived ideas, and the expectations of others. We learn to leave behind our small world of sensory validation in order to walk by faith.

2) "He says to you" - In contrast to what your tradition may say, what the majority thinks, or even what your own thoughts or feeling may be, yield an attentive simplicity, an absolute singleness to God. Own what you've believed, what you think or feel, subordinate it to what God may say. When the Holy Spirit takes God's "logos" (objective, eternal words of the Lord) and "turns on the lights" in the subjective moment, it becomes "rhema" (His spoken word) to us.

3) "Do it" - Revelation of truth is not for spectators, but for participants. We must respond with human consent in the obedience of faith (Ro 1:5; 16:26; Ps 81:11,13) This particular response reveals whether or not we are enchanted with the ideas of truth and transformation, or, actually willing to be changed. There is a time to stop waiting, discussing, and praying... and choose to obey! We hear God's words not to learn them but to live them! Participation is required for confirmation. Knowing follows our action. Transformation follows, not precedes the obedience of faith.

So much of the explainable, mediocre, and boring nature of our "Christianity" is due to the tendency to conform to what man says rather than to be transformed by what God says. In our obedience of faith, God provides what we cannot produce. In this John 2 story, it was wine. What is it in your story?

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## Praise Reports & Prayer Requests

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 **GREETINGS** 

Every now and then you just hit a "wall". A wall of fatigue or frustration. A wall of discouragement or of confusion. It might be a physical wall, a soulish wall or a spiritual wall. It may last for days or for weeks.

A few years back while doing a "ropes" course we had to get everyone on our ten-member team over a wall. A 13 foot wall! Everyone! Young and old, little and big, weak and strong. Everyone! The idea itself seemed foolish - "It can't be done! This is stupid! I can't get over that wall! What a waste of time!"

Two things will quickly turn discouragement into despair: 1) Aloneness - none of us could have gotten over that wall alone. 2) Meaningfulness - exercises in futility will lead us to quit. To make it brief, we all got over that wall. From the smallest (85 lbs) to the largest (285 lbs). Youngest (14) to oldest (71). Athletes and nerds.

How? We were not alone. With the nerds' intelligence and the athletes' strength, with youthful energy and aged wisdom, we did it! And we figured out this was not meaningless - it was a purposeful event and there was a creative way to overcome our doubts and get the job done.

When you hit the wall this month (or next), remember: 1) You are not alone! (Matt 28:20; Heb 13:5; I Cor 12:12-26) 2) There is meaning, divine intent for the wall (Ro 8:28-29; 11:36) and then, perhaps, "By my God I can leap over a wall." (Ps 18:29)

**AUGUST**

6,20,27 CCF  
8 Alachua Study  
11-13 Fruitland Park, FL (352-431-3935)  
22 Land Harbor, NC (828-291-0657)

**SEPTEMBER**

24-30 Glenwood Springs, CO

**OCTOBER**

6-8 Binghamton, NY (607-239-5006)  
20-22 Hardin, KY (270-437-4172)

 **PRAISE and PRAYER** 

 Thanks for truth tellers.

 Thanks for the transforming power of God.

 To "leap over walls" by God's grace.

 To trust in what God provides that we cannot produce.