

Good morning! One of the interesting developments in Christianity over the centuries has been the lines we have drawn between what is “essential” and what is *adiaphora*. Hey, how do you like that big word? *Adiaphora*--- pretty impressive, right? Yep, and I have just been waiting for a chance to use it! *Adiaphora* is a Greek word that means “stuff that doesn’t matter”. Go ahead; use it yourself and impress your Christian friends! (By the way, Jesus probably won’t be that impressed with it—He thinks I should use words that people already know.) An example of *adiaphora* might be whether or not pastors should wear vestments, what kind of music is used in the worship service, whether the congregation meets in a church building or in a house. Over the years, many congregations have taken the position that if the Bible doesn’t say it, we shouldn’t do it...but is that really true? This morning, let’s look together at something Paul wrote to the congregation in Thessalonica:

So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by our spoken word or by our letters.

2 Thessalonians 2:15

Hey, wait a minute. Traditions? What about *Sola Scriptura*---“Scripture Alone”? OK, so they only had the Old Testament, but that’s still a lot of scripture. Here’s the thing: It doesn’t say anywhere in the Bible that we should only do things that the Bible itself tells us to do. In fact, Paul says to keep the traditions that he is passing along by word of mouth or by the letters he has been writing to them. The idea isn’t that we should only do things the Bible specifically says to do; the idea is that our traditions should never go against Scripture or be elevated above God himself, in His love and justice. Our traditions should support the scriptural directives. So does something bother you that you do in the liturgy at your church? Is it against the scriptures or can you just not *find* it in the scriptures? It may not be in there, but that doesn’t mean God doesn’t like it. Before you confront the elders over it, take some time to see what the purpose is; how it measures up to what the Bible says; whether or not it is valuable. Traditions can be useful in pointing us toward God and the life He has for us. Christians have been encountering Jesus through them for thousands of years. Jesus is alive this morning...and you might even find Him in your church's traditions!