

2 Timothy 4: 1 – 18

'Myths/Superstition/Faith'

Introduction ...

'People will turn away from listening to the truth and wander away to myths'

That's verse 4 from our New Testament reading of **2 Timothy chapter 4**.

Elsewhere the same is said of turning away to superstitions or to 'old wives' tales' – perhaps slightly unfairly on Mothering Sunday!

So what are the differences between 'faith' and 'superstition' ... between following 'myths' and being a Christian disciple?

One writer, Joseph Hall, stated this: **'Superstition is godless religion ...'** but I think he is using 'religion' in a way that has no place in Christian faith and practice.

Superstition:

Superstition – has, I think, at its heart a desire to control, to be in control.

If I do the right things ... If I avoid doing the wrong things ... then I'll be safe.

I must always wear my lucky ... belt, scarf, brooch or hat ... and then I'll get home safely at the end of the day.

'Touch wood' is usually about avoiding something bad happening.

And the focus is not really on who or what will keep us safe or stop bad happening ... the focus is about 'me' doing the action.

Sometimes religious practice ... including that of Christians can degenerate into this ... for example: **Making the sign of the cross** – can help a conscious prayer of help or of thanks to God ... or can slip into being a superstitious habit.

Difference ..

As I suggested earlier – superstitious practice is aiming for control.

What then is the aim of Christian practice – at its heart is the deepening of relationship – our relationship with God – God the Trinity.

Another quote from Katherine T. Hinkson:

'Superstition is the cruelist thing in the world. Faith is to sit in the sun,' ... that is the first line.

The last is **'Superstition is the cruelist thing in the world ... it is to sit in darkness.'**

PTO

For those who become deeply committed – almost addicted – to their superstition – the irony and sadness is that what they thought would give them control ... ends up controlling them.

I know of one lady who would never go out of the house before reading her daily horoscope ... and if there was anything slightly worrying in it, she wouldn't go out at all. It was controlling her ... she was living in darkness.

As Christians we have a different way of looking at and living in the world. If something deepens our friendship with God it's a valid holy habit ... and will lead to a sense of freedom – of **living in the sun** - if we have a habit that doesn't deepen our relationship with God ... well, it's probably best to examine it ... is it a superstition that leads eventually more to bondage than to freedom?

And as a last question ... is it ok to say such things as **'touch wood'**?

In coming to an answer – what witness does it give to our relationship with Jesus?

Amen.