

# Matthew 15 Commentary

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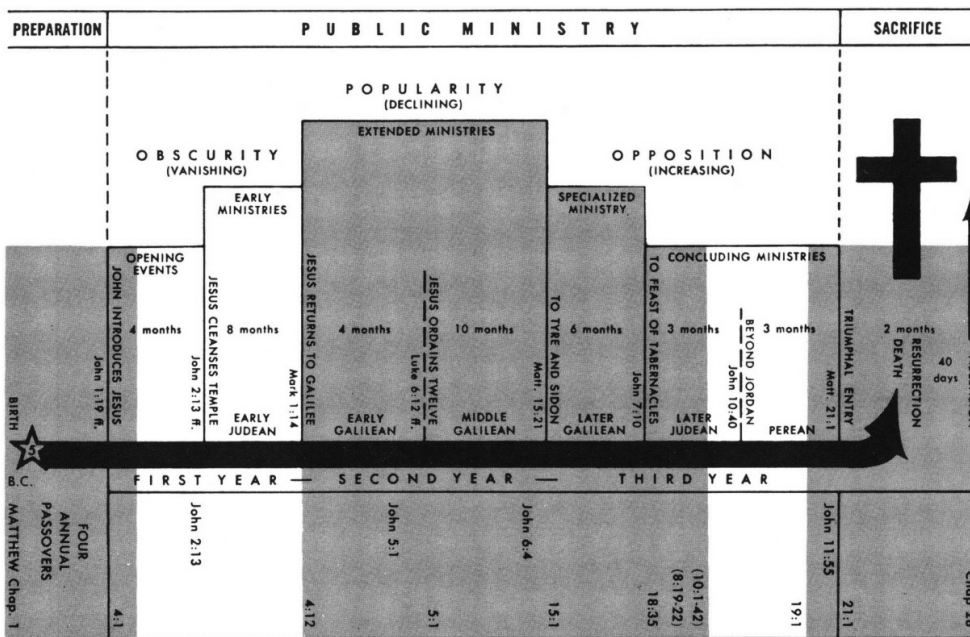
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MATTHEW CONTAINS 15 PARABLES 20 MIRACLES KEY VERSES: 1:1 "The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham." 2:2 "Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him."

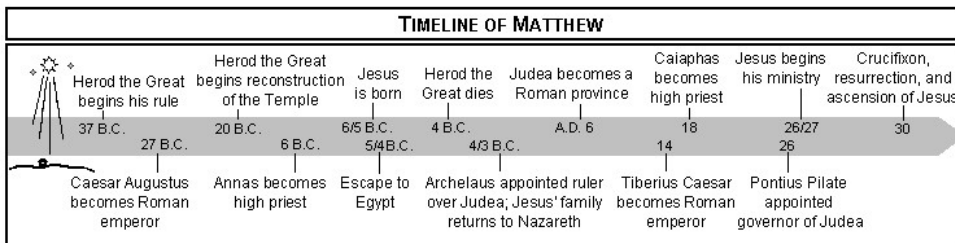


Click chart to enlarge  
 Charts from Jensen's Survey of the NT - used by permission  
 Another Chart from Swindoll

**THE LIFE OF JESUS AS COVERED BY MATTHEW (shaded area)**



Click chart to enlarge



Source: Ryrie Study Bible

**Matthew 15:1 Then some Pharisees and scribes came<sup>^</sup> to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,**

NET Matthew 15:1 Then Pharisees and experts in the law came from Jerusalem to Jesus and said,

NLT Matthew 15:1 Some Pharisees and teachers of religious law now arrived from Jerusalem to see Jesus.

ESV Matthew 15:1 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said,

NIV Matthew 15:1 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked,

GNT Matthew 15:1 Τ τε προσ ρχονται τ ησο π εροσολ μων Φαρισα οι κα γραμματε ς λ γοντες,

KJV Matthew 15:1 Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

- **came:** Mk 7:1-13
- **scribes:** Mt 5:20 23:2,15-28 Lu 5:30 Ac 23:9
- **from Jerusalem:** Lu 5:17,21
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

The Pharisees and some of the scribes gathered around Him when they had come from Jerusalem,

### OFFICIAL DELEGATION OF THE BROOD OF VIPERS

**Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said** - **From Jerusalem** implies that news of this Galilean prophet and teacher has reached the center of Judaism so these men were sent from "headquarters" so to speak. They traveled about 100 miles in a time when travel over distances was not easy which underscores how determined they were to "shut Jesus down!" It is too bad the text did not simply say they "**came to Jesus**," (cf this same phrase -- with disciples - Mt 17:19 Mt 26:17, Lk 8:24, a leper - Mk 1:40, a blind man - Mk 10:50, Nicodemus - Jn 3:2, Samaritans - Jn 4:40). But of course the **Pharisees and scribes** did not come with affection but with animosity (cf similar uses of phrase **came to Jesus** - Mt 19:3, Mt 22:23, Mk 12:18). They did not come with humble hearts but with hardened hearts. Can't you envision this "brood of vipers" (Mt 3:7+) with serpentine precision surrounding Jesus, as if preparing their "victim" for a kill (which is in fact what they were doing - Mt 17:23, Mt 21:38, especially Mt 26:4)!

**William Barclay** suggests that these religious "investigators" "are genuinely bewildered; and in a very short time they are going to be genuinely outraged and shocked."

**Lenski** points out that "The clash recorded in Matthew 12 seems to have been one with the **local** Pharisees in Galilee. Now, however, a delegation of Pharisees and scribes (see Mt 2:4+ and Mt 3:7+) has arrived from the capital, both to spy upon Jesus and to help in discrediting him in the eyes of the people

**A T Robertson** on **from Jerusalem** - Jerusalem is the headquarters of the conspiracy against Jesus with the Pharisees as the leaders in it. Already we have seen the Herodians combining with the Pharisees in the purpose to put Jesus to death (Mark 3:6=Matt. 12:14=Luke 6:11). Soon Jesus will warn the disciples against the Sadducees also (Matt. 16:6). ""The guardians of tradition in the capital have their evil eye on Jesus....." (Bruce)

**E. Stanley Jones** writes on **they had come from Jerusalem** - They came all the way from Jerusalem to meet Him, and their life attitudes were so negative and faultfinding that all they saw was unwashed hands. They couldn't see the greatest movement of redemption that had ever touched our planet—a movement that was cleansing the minds and souls and bodies of men.... Their big eyes were opened wide to the little and marginal, and blind to the big. So history forgets them, the negative—forgets them except as a background for this impact of the positive Christ. They left a criticism; He left a conversion. They picked flaws, He picked followers. (Growing Spiritually)

**Pharisees** ([5330](#)) ([pharisaios](#)) is transliterated from the Hebrew **parash** ([06567](#) - to separate) from Aramaic word **peras** ([06537](#)) ("Peres" in Da 5:28+), signifying to separate, owing to a different manner of life from that of the general public. After the resettling of the Jewish people in Judea on their return from the Babylonian captivity, there were two religious groups among them. One party contented themselves with following only what was written in the Law of Moses and were known as **Zadikim**, the righteous. The other group called **Chasidim** or the pious added traditions of Jewish rabbis to the Law and voluntarily complied with them. **Sadducees** originated from the Zadikim. Pharisees and the **Essenes** originated from the Chasidim. The Pharisees were the separatists of their day, and considered themselves much holier than the common people (Lu 18:11, 12). even wearing special garments to distinguish themselves. Although Pharisees were in number (about 6,000 according to [Josephus, Ant. 17.2.4](#)), their theology and tradition had great influence with the common people (who, ironically, the Pharisees often viewed with proud, self-righteous contempt [cf. [John 7:49](#)]) In opposition to those of the Sadducees, The Pharisees were "supernaturalists" and believed in the

existence of angels and spirits and the resurrection (Lk 20:27+; Acts 23:6–9+), which the Sadducees denied (Mt 22:23; Mk 12:18; Lu 20:27).

The Pharisees distinguished themselves by their zeal for the traditions of men, which held to be equal to the Word of God. With the completion of the [Mishnah](#) (written compilation of the oral law, rituals, and traditions) in about A.D. 200, and the Talmud (the combination of the [Mishnah](#) and the [Gemara](#) [three centuries of the rabbis' commentary on the [Mishnah](#)]) in about A.D. 500, the Pharisees' teaching became virtually synonymous with Judaism. Ironically, it was their zeal for the law that caused the Pharisees to become focused on rituals and externally keeping the law. They abandoned true religion of the heart for mere outward behavior modification and ritual (Mt. 15:3–6), leading Jesus to scathingly denounce their pseudospirituality: The complex set of man-made rules and regulations was a crushing, unbearable burden (Mt. 23:4; Acts 15:10). ([See more detailed notes from William Barclay](#))

**Scribes** (1122)([grammateus](#) from [grapho](#) = to write) was one skilled in Jewish law and theology and most sources consider the **lawyers** (nomikos = one skilled in the Mosaic law) to be scribes. They were recognized experts in the law of Moses and in and the traditions propounded in the rabbinic writings. Not all [Pharisees](#) were scribes, but the scribes were primarily [Pharisees](#), who were interpreters and teachers of the law of Moses and the traditional rabbinic writings. Their teaching provided the theological framework for the Pharisees' legalistic system of works-righteousness. The **scribes** were the dominant force in Judaism, not only theologically, but socially because their views affected every aspect of Jewish life, social and legal. They were revered, and given the respectful title of Rabbi (Mt. 23:7). Uses in Matthew's Gospel - Matt. 2:4; Matt. 5:20; Matt. 7:29; Matt. 8:19; Matt. 9:3; Matt. 12:38; Matt. 13:52; Matt. 15:1; Matt. 16:21; Matt. 17:10; Matt. 20:18; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 23:2; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:14; Matt. 23:15; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:25; Matt. 23:27; Matt. 23:29; Matt. 23:34; Matt. 26:57; Matt. 27:41

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#### Vance Havner - "Keep Thy Heart" Matthew 15:1-20 Mark 7:1-23

ONE is amazed at the Pharisees and scribes who could look over all the mighty works and teachings of our Lord and fasten upon such a petty matter as the fact that His disciples did not wash their hands according to traditional regulations (Matt. 15:1-20; Mark 7:1-23). Yet we still have with us those who value set customs above the inner realities, to whom sacrifice is more important than mercy. Our Lord described both classes with His quotation from Isaiah 29:13: "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoreth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."

Jesus recognized a **clean heart** above **clean hands**. He reproved them for their "corban" custom by which they dedicated gifts to God and therefore escaped giving them to the needy. It was well to vow gifts to God, but it had degenerated into a clever excuse for not helping the ones in need—a pretext for evading responsibility.

It is not what goeth into a man but what proceeds from him—his thoughts and acts, which reveal his heart, these defile him. Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. Therefore, "keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."

Such teaching offended the Pharisees, but Jesus said, "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch." It reminds us of the Old Testament statement: "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone" (Hos. 4:17). Our Lord made no effort to rescue these Pharisees; He regarded them as hopelessly set against Him. They had committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

Well does formal and religious America need to ponder our Lord's position as to outward ritual and inward reality. Throughout the Word, God cries against it: through Isaiah 1:11-17, Hosea 6:6, Amos 5:21-24. Jesus followed the prophets with their own words, hurling them against an entrenched religiousness that could become excited over a slight disregard for precedent but could not see the truth of the Son of God.

Today, sticklers for the niceties of tradition still strain out the gnat and swallow the camel, are careful to observe seasons and ordinances and minute church restrictions; but their heart is far from God. Jesus, however, would break a precedent and smash a tradition anytime to get at a needy life. Sabbath regulations were less important than a withered hand.

There are even Christians who have bordered on medieval asceticism by denying themselves wholesome and normal enjoyment and regulating each detail with meticulous care until they have fallen into the error of the Colossians, "Touch not, taste not, handle not." One is not more holy by being less human. It is the state of the heart that matters most, for evil comes from within. It does no good to cleanse the hands with water if the heart has not been cleansed by the blood.

**Matthew 15:2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread."**

NET Matthew 15:2 "Why do your disciples disobey the tradition of the elders? For they don't wash their hands when they eat."

NLT Matthew 15:2 "Why do your disciples disobey our age-old tradition?" they demanded. "They ignore our tradition of ceremonial hand washing before they eat."

ESV Matthew 15:2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat."

NIV Matthew 15:2 "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

GNT Matthew 15:2 Δι τ ο μαθητα σου παραβανουσιν τ ν παρ δοσιν τ ν πρεσβυτ ρων; ο γ ρ ν ππονται τ ς χε ρας [α τ ν] ταν ρτον σθ ωσιν.

KJV Matthew 15:2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

- **break:** Mk 7:2,5 Ge 1:14 Col 2:8,20-23 1Pe 1:18
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Related Passages:**

Mk 7:2+ and had seen that some of His disciples were eating their bread with impure hands, that is, unwashed.

Mk 7:5+ The Pharisees and the scribes \*asked Him, "Why do Your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with impure hands?"

**Diligently Studying the [Talmud](#)**

**William MacDonald** notes that "It is often pointed out that Matthew does not follow a chronological order during the early chapters. But from the beginning of chapter 14 to the end, events are largely given in the sequence in which they occurred."

**Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders**- Note they do not ask why they do not keep the Law of God, because there is no such "rule" in the Law of God. But these deceived leaders have foolishly elevated men's traditions to as great (and even greater) as the Law of God. And they have convinced the Jewish populace of this fallacious teaching. So if they can show Jesus' disciples are breaking their highly esteemed traditions, they can begin to turn the populace against this "Miracle Man." Notice that they did not just say tradition but the tradition of the elders which would convey (in their estimation) a great sense of authority (cf Josephus Antiquities 10.51).

**Osborne** adds the "Pharisees affirmed the authority and value of oral tradition, while other groups did not (e.g., Sadducees). In this way, the Pharisees held themselves to a stricter legal code than did others."

**Adam Clarke** - "In what estimation these are held by the Jews, the following examples will prove: 'The words of the scribes are lovely beyond the words of the law: for the words of the law are weighty and light, but the words of the scribes are all weighty.' Hierus. Berac. fol. 3."

**Utley on Tradition of the Elders** - This was a reference to the large body of oral traditions called the **Mishnah** which interpreted the Law of Moses and helped apply it to everyday life (See also [What is the Mishnah?](#)). The Mishnah was codified most completely by Rabbi Judah in A.D. 200 and later became part of the **Talmud** (See also [What is the Talmud?](#)). It was believed by the rabbis to be as authoritative as the Torah (Gen.–Deut.), for it, too, was believed to have been given orally to Moses by God (cf. Deut. 4:14). (**ED:** The Mishna at the end of the Second century said, "*Tradition is the fence around the Law!*" I would say it is more like a "fence" keeping one from getting into the Law!)

**Brian Bell** - As one Rabbi put it, "The Scriptures are water, the Mishnah is wine; the [Gemara](#) spiced wine." The Jewish [Mishnah](#) contained no less than 30 chapters on the cleansing of vessels. This Hand washing ritual came from the command for priests to wash their hands (Ex 30:19+; Ex 40:12+). It was a reminder to come to God clean (i.e. with clean hearts). All pious Jews started doing this about 200 yrs before Christ. So, by Jesus day, it was firmly entrenched as a requirement for those who wanted to be

clean. a) They completely lost the original idea of clean hearts. ([Sermon](#))

If the Pharisees' were alive today, their theme song would likely be Tevye's "[Tradition \(listen\)](#)" in **Fiddler on the Roof**, a good song but a bad practice.

**Gregg Allen on Fiddler on the Roof** - You know the story of that musical, don't you? It tells of Tevye, the humble, working-class Jewish father of five daughters—three of them eligible and longing to be married—and of his struggle to hold his family and his religious culture together in the midst of a rapidly changing world. Tevye starts off by chatting away at the audience about how life in his community is like "a fiddler on a roof" who is trying to scratch out a tune without breaking his neck. And when he stops, looks at the audience, and asks, "How do we keep our balance?", he answers, "That I can tell you in one word." Then, pointing a resolute finger into the air, he says, "*Tradition!*" Tradition, in and of itself, isn't a bad thing. It really is a helpful way that the people in any particular culture manage to keep things together in life. But as Jesus' confrontation with the Pharisees and scribes shows us, there can also be a very dark side to "tradition"—particularly "religious tradition". As this passage teaches us, religious 'traditions' can easily become sinful 'transgressions'—especially when they cause us to set aside the clear commands of God's word, and become a substitute for entering into a true relationship with God by faith. It's a danger that we, in the body of Christ, need to constantly be on guard against. One of the areas that this body of "traditions" had sought to regulate in daily life was that of "cleanliness". The concern was not so much over "personal hygiene" as it was over "ceremonial cleanliness" or "religious purity". Cleanliness was considered a part of the essential qualifications for spirituality. One of the rabbis taught, "Zeal leads to cleanliness, cleanliness to ritual purity, ritual purity to self-control, self-control to holiness, holiness to humility, humility to fear of sin, fear of sin to saintliness, and saintliness to the Holy Spirit" (Sot. IX.15)<sup>1</sup>. Another wrote, "Physical cleanliness leads to spiritual purity" (A.Z. 20b)<sup>2</sup>. And yet another wrote, "One should wash his face, hands, and feet everyday out of respect for his Maker" (Shab. 50b)<sup>3</sup>. Some of these ancient Jewish teachers were extremely strong in their insistence on careful, ceremonial washings—particularly when it came to handling one's own food. One wrote, "Whoever eats bread without first washing his hands is as though he had sinned with a harlot. Whoever makes light of the washing of his hands will be uprooted from the world. Whoever eats bread without scouring his hands is as though he eats unclean bread" (Sot. 4b)<sup>4</sup>. Another wrote, "A person who despises the washing of the hands before a meal is to be excommunicated" (Ber. 19a)<sup>5</sup>. ([Sermon](#))

**Break** (transgress) ([3845](#)) ([parabaino](#) from [pará](#) = beside, beyond, contrary to + [baínō](#) = to walk, to go) means to go beside (walk beside, pass by), to overstep (transgress), to pass over, to let pass, to let slip. Only 3 uses in NT - Mt 15:2, 3, Acts 1:25. Parabaino is used much more frequently in the [Septuagint](#) and especially in the context of transgressing God's covenant and/or commands. To transgress means to pass beyond limits or boundaries.

**Tradition** ([3862](#)) ([paradosis](#) from [paradidomi](#) = deliver in teaching) means literally to give from the presence of, thus to give personally. It signifies an act of transmission or that which is transmitted and thus refers to that which is handed down or transmitted from generation to generation or from one to another. In this context **paradosis** was used to refer to the traditions of men which had been grafted on the Mosaic Law. All 8 uses (of a total of 13 in NT) in the Gospels are in the parallel descriptions in Matthew 15 and Mark 7 (Matt. 15:2; Matt. 15:3; Matt. 15:6; Mk. 7:3; Mk. 7:5; Mk. 7:8; Mk. 7:9; Mk. 7:13) MacArthur writes that "Ancestral **traditions** refers to the body of oral teachings about the Old Testament law that came to have equal authority with the Law. Commonly known as the [Halakah](#), this collection of [Torah](#) interpretations became a fence around God's revealed law and all but hid it from view. Over a period of several hundred years it had expanded into a mammoth accumulation of religious, moral, legal, practical, and ceremonial regulations that defied comprehension, much less total compliance. It contained such vast amounts of minutiae that even the most learned rabbinical scholars could not master it either by interpretation or in behavior. Yet the more complex and burdensome it became, the more zealously Jewish legalists revered and propagated it." ([Galatians](#))

**For** (term of explanation explains how they transgress) **they do not wash their hands when they eat bread**- A simple reading might make one think that the disciples eat food with dirty hands. Of course that is not what the scribes and Pharisees are saying. They are referring to ceremonial washing of hands to assure "ritual purity," a practice that Jesus would soon show focused on the external and not on the internal. Their vain attempts at pursuing "religion" missed God's heart desire for a relationship!

Jesus recognized a clean heart above clean hands.

-- Vance Havner

The Gospel of Mark was written primarily to a Gentile audience who would not have understood these statements about washing hands and so Mark adds an explanation...

(For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they carefully wash their hands, thus observing the **traditions of the elders**; 4 and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they cleanse themselves; and there are many other things which they have received in order to observe, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and copper pots.) (Mk 7:3-4+).

**Allen** comments that the Pharisees "believed that the traditions of the elders were binding; and it was profoundly offensive to their religious sensitivities that He—as a Teacher in Israel—had not taught His disciples to keep those traditions and observe them carefully."

We have all heard the saying "**Cleanliness is next to Godliness**" but in the current passage it would be more accurate to say that "**Cleanliness is next to Godlessness!**" And so in this section we will see Jesus challenge the religious leaders with what is really important in the eyes of God -- Is it the inside or outside? Is it washing hands or washing hearts (cf Ezek 36:24-27+, Titus 3:5-6+)? Is it what goes in the mouth or what comes out of the heart? (see Mt 15:16-20)

**Utley** - The OT did not require washing before every meal, but tradition grew from Ex. 30:19 where the priests were to wash and Lev. 15, where those who touched something unclean were to wash. By Jesus' time washing before meals had become a major part of Jewish religious life. One early rabbi was excommunicated for not washing properly! Not only was washing before meals commanded, but washing after and even between the individual courses was also considered a religious ceremonial duty.

**A T Robertson** - Handwashing before meals is not a requirement of the Old Testament. It is, we know, a good thing for sanitary reasons, but the rabbis made it a mark of righteousness for others at any rate. This item was magnified at great length in the oral teaching....Thus a real issue is raised between Jesus and the rabbis. It was far more than a point of etiquette or of hygienics. The rabbis held it to be a mortal sin.

**Guzik** - Many ancient Jews took this tradition of the elders very seriously. "The Jewish Rabbi Jose saith, He sinneth as much who eateth with unwashen hands, as he that lieth with a harlot." (Poole)

**John Gill** - R. Eleazer, whoever despiseth washing of hands, shall be rooted out of the world."

**Cathers** - It's not wrong to have traditions. Traditions can be a good thing. But when our traditions start to contradict what God clearly says in His Word, we're heading for trouble.

One prescription for washing - "One was to take one and a half eggshells of water and pour it over his hands as they were pressed together uprightly, letting the water drip only to his wrists and no further. Then, he would flip his hands over, pointing them downward while yet another one-and-a-half eggshells of water was poured over them. Finally, he was to rub his right fist with his left palm, then his left fist with his right palm. This procedure was followed not only before every meal, but between each course of every meal." (from Jon Courson)

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**MacArthur** on "**Traditions of the Elders**": "In their minds the tradition of the elders was superior to Scripture, in the sense that it was the only reliable interpretation of God's Word. Just as Roman Catholics look to church dogma to discover what Scripture "really means," most Jews of Jesus' day looked to the tradition of the elders. In much the same way, many Protestants give more authority to the pronouncements of their denomination than to the Bible.

The **Talmud**, which is the repository of Jewish tradition, teaches that God gave the oral law to Moses and then told Moses to pass it on to great men of Israel. These men were then to do three things with the law they had received. First, they were to deliberate on it and properly apply it. Second, they were to train disciples in order that the next generation would have teachers of the law. Third, they were to build a wall around the law in order to protect it.

Because their hearts were not right with God, the rabbis' wall-building "protection" of His law actually undermined and contradicted it. Their purpose was not to lead the people to worship and serve God from pure hearts made clean by Him, but to worship and serve Him by human means and from unchanged hearts. To provide the means for superficially keeping God's commandments, regulation after regulation and ceremony after ceremony were added, until God's own Word was utterly hidden behind the wall of tradition. Instead of protecting God's Word, the tradition obscured and perverted it.

When the northern kingdom of Israel and then the southern kingdom of Judah were taken into captivity, the Jewish people felt as if God had abandoned them. The real reason for their captivity, of course, was that they had abandoned Him. They were suffering God's judgment, just as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets had repeatedly and vividly warned they would.

While the Jews were in exile, scribes (the first of whom was Ezra) began to assemble and copy the various books of Scripture written to that time. They also began to make comments on various passages that seemed unclear; and gradually a larger and larger accumulation of interpretations was developed until there was more interpretation than Scripture. The distinction between Scripture and the traditions based on interpretations of Scripture gradually became less and less distinct, and before long tradition was more familiar and more revered than God's own Word.

By Jesus' day, the tradition of the elders had for many years supplanted Scripture as the supreme religious authority in the minds of Jewish leaders and of most of the people. The traditions even affirmed that "the words of scribes are more lovely than the words of the law," and it became a greater offense in Judaism to transgress the teaching of some rabbi such as the revered Hillel than to transgress the teaching of Scripture.

In the thinking of the Pharisees and scribes who approached Jesus on this occasion, it was therefore an extremely serious matter that His disciples would transgress the tradition of the elders. Jesus and His disciples disregarded all the rabbinical traditions, and the particular infraction cited here was simply representative of many others that could have been mentioned. " (MNTC-Matthew)

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**Barclay** describes how absurd rules of clean and unclean could be - This is not only a Jewish idea; it occurs in other religions. To a high-caste Indian anyone not belonging to his own caste is unclean; if that person becomes a Christian, he is still more seriously unclean. Premanand tells us what happened to himself. He became a Christian; his family ejected him. Sometimes he used to come back to see his mother, who was broken-hearted at what she considered his apostasy, but still loved him dearly. Premanand says: "As soon as my father came to know that I was visiting my mother in the daytime while he was away at the office, he ordered the door-keeper, a stalwart up-country man, Ram Rup ... not to allow me to enter the house." Ram Rup was persuaded to slacken his vigilance. "At last my mother won over Ram Rup, the door-keeper, and I was allowed to enter her presence. The prejudice was so great that even the menial Hindu servants of the house would not wash the plates on which I was fed by my mother. Sometimes my aunt would purify the place and the seat on which I had sat by sprinkling Ganges water, or water mixed with cow dung." Premanand was unclean, and everything he touched became unclean. ([Commentary](#))

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[Knox Chamblin](#) gives some helpful background on the traditions, oral law, etc..."**THE TRADITION OF THE ELDERS.**"

For light on this phrase, we turn to **Pirke Aboth** ("Chapters of the Fathers"), one of 63 tractates in the **Mishnah**. P.A. is mostly "a selection of maxims on conduct and sayings in praise of the Law handed down in the names of 60 teachers of the Law who lived between 300 B.C. and A.D. 200 from the time of Simeon the Just to Rabbi Judah the Patriarch, the editor of the Mishnah" (H. Danby, [The Mishnah](#), 446, n. 1). Says P.A. 1:1, "Moses received the Law from Sinai and committed it to Joshua, and Joshua to the elders, and the elders to the Prophets; and the Prophets committed it to the men of the Great Synagogue. They said three things: Be deliberate in judgment, raise up many disciples, and make a fence around the Law."

#### A. The Concept of Torah in P.A. 1:1.

"The Law ([Torah](#)) throughout post-biblical Jewish religious literature has the threefold connotation of (a) the Pentateuch, the 'Written Law'; (b) the 'traditions of the elders' - rules of Jewish life and religion which in the course of centuries had come to possess a validity and sanctity equal to that of the Written Law and which, as the 'Oral Law,' were deemed, equally with the Written Law, to be of divine origin and therefore consonant with and, for the most part, deducible from the Written Law; and (c) the study of the Law in its twofold aspect [of Oral and Written Law]" (Danby, [Mishnah](#), 446, n. 2).

#### B. The Oral Law as Revelation.

According to P.A. 1:1, the oral law is not an addition to God's Law, but as an integral part of that Law. The oral law is considered to be **revelation from God**. (The same point was made by Rabbi Stephen Engel in one of Knox Chamblin's classes at RTS, May 1993.) Cf. H. L. Strack, [Introduction to the Talmud and Midrash](#), 10: "It is maintained by orthodox Jewish scholars that from the very beginning, i.e. from the time of the giving of the Law on mount Sinai, there had been in existence an oral law, carried on traditionally." Write G. H. C. Macgregor and A.C. Purdy: "What might have seemed new in the succeeding centuries was only apparently so, when viewed in the light of the written code, but actually it was as old as the Pentateuch itself. For the revelation was embodied in part in writing, and in part it was transmitted orally from generation to generation in unbroken succession down to the schools of the Law in which Tradition was defined, formulated, and systematized" ([Jew and Greek](#), 75).

#### C. The Oral Law as Application.



For the orthodox rabbis the Oral Law was a necessary application of the written law. This is (so they argued) precisely what the OT prophets did - they "repeated, explained, emphasized, and applied (the) revelation, but they added nothing new" (ibid.).

#### D. Allegiance to the Law.

The "fence around the law" (P.A. 1:1) consisted of safeguards against infringements of the Law. "The famous Rabbinic 'fence around the Law' was intended to block you at the furthest possible distance from any overt transgression" (R. A. Stewart, [Rabbinic Theology](#), 5). "Things which by the letter of the law must be completed before morning, by rabbinical rule must be done before midnight, 'to keep a man far removed from transgression' (G. F. Moore, [Judaism](#), 1:33, quoting from the Mishnah). Cf. *Berakoth* 1:1 (in the Mishnah): "Why then have the Sages said: Until midnight? To keep a man from transgression." Such enactments were viewed not as new rulings, but as stricter applications of existing rulings.

#### E. Preservation of the Law.

**Mishnah**, from the Hebrew *shanaḥ* ("to repeat") "means 'that which is to be learned by repetition,' therefore by memory. The further implication is that the Mishnah [early 3rd c. A.D.] contains materials which had been memorized and not written down for a very long time" (Jacob Neusner, [Invitation to the Talmud](#) (1st ed., 35).

#### F. The Weight of the Tradition.

Recurring in P.A. 1 are the words "received [the Law] from [him or] them." "The primary purpose of this collection of maxims is to demonstrate the continuity and hence the weight of tradition" (Strack, [Introduction](#), 53). Such a view of the tradition was vital for maintaining Jewish life and thought. This chain of tradition comes right down to Gamaliel, grandson (or son) of Hillel (P.A. 1:16), teacher of Saul of Tarsus. In this light, cf. Gal 1:14, "I was...extremely zealous for the traditions of my fathers [*ton patrikon mou paradoseon*]."

#### G. "The Great Synagogue." P.A. 1:1.

This was a general assembly of Jewish leaders, "a body of 120 elders, including many prophets, who came up from exile with Ezra" (Danby, *Mishnah*, 446, n. 5). Cf. Ezra 6:14; 10:14. It was naturally Ezra who presided over the body (Moore, [Judaism](#), 1: 31). Their purpose was **not innovation but preservation**; they were viewed not as creators of law but as restorers of law. The G. S. was modelled on what Neh 8 records about Ezra's **reading** of the Law, together with the accompanying **explanation** and **applications**. "They saw that prophecy had come to an end and that restraint was lacking; therefore they made many new rules and restrictions for the better observance of the Law" (Danby, 446, n. 5). The work of Ezra and the G. S. proved to be a base in its own right, different from the base at Sinai but nonetheless a vitally important watershed so far as the hallowing and the preserving of the tradition were concerned. Cf. the function of the Westminster Assembly in Presbyterian history: Westminster was itself based on Scripture, but itself came to be treated as a base for developing tradition.

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#### Related Resources:

- Alfred Edersheim - [The Cavils of the Pharisees Concerning Purification, and the Teaching of the Lord Concerning Purity - the Traditions Concerning Hand-Washing' and Vows](#)
- [Handwashing in Judaism](#)
- [Ritual Handwashing](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Tradition](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Tradition](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Tradition](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Tradition](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Tradition](#) [Tradition \(2\)](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Tradition](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Tradition](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Traditions](#)

**Matthew 15:3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"**

NET Matthew 15:3 He answered them, "And why do you disobey the commandment of God because of your tradition?"

NLT Matthew 15:3 Jesus replied, "And why do you, by your traditions, violate the direct commandments of God?"

ESV Matthew 15:3 He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition?"

NIV Matthew 15:3 Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

GNT Matthew 15:3 ὁ αποκριθε ς επεν ατο ς, Δι τ κα με ς παραβα νετε τ ν ντολ ν το θεο δι τ ν παρ ὁσιν μ ν;

KJV Matthew 15:3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

- **Why** : Mt 7:3-5 Mk 7:6-8,13 Col 2:8,23 Titus 1:14
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**STRIKING CONTRAST:  
MAN MADE VS GOD GIVEN**

**And He answered - Answered** is [apokrinomai](#) which is a somewhat formal response or reaction to a question and Hebraistically was used a formula to control the flow of discourse. In this case Jesus was clearly in control of the flow of the discourse! Notice the root of **apokrinomai** is [krino](#) which means to judge and so the idea of the verb is to make a distinction, in this case between what the religious leaders thought was truth (traditions of men) and what really is truth (God's Word). Jesus would frequently respond to questions addressed to Himself with a question of His own! So here we see Jesus immediately go on the offensive! Notice that He responds with quotes from Moses and a quote from Isaiah. How could the Pharisees argue His use of the Law and the Prophets?

**And said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God - Transgress** is in the [present tense](#), thus Jesus is justifiably accusing the "religionists" of continually transgressing the infallible truth of God's Word in favor of men's fallible words! Imagine the anger of these leaders beginning to rise up against Jesus as He asks this direct question. Although it is in the form of a question, it clearly is an accusation against these religious bigots.

**THOUGHT** - Keeping the commandments did not make the Jews righteous, but if the laws are kept out of love & reverence for the Lord and from the heart (Lk 1:6, 17 Lk 2:25), not out of ritualistic obedience, then this "keeping of the commandments" is evidence of a righteousness from God in that individual (cp Ro 3:21,22)

**Transgress** (break) ([3845](#)) see above for [parabaino](#)

**for** - Term of explanation. Jesus explains why they transgress God's truth.

**The sake of your tradition** - Note **your tradition**, not "God's tradition!" "Note the word **"your."** The Lord was denying their claim that Jewish tradition went back to Moses when He bluntly called it their tradition." (Phillips) These legalistic religious leaders followed man-made rules many of which were utterly ridiculous but all of which made obedience a burden instead of a blessing. It is fascinating that these man-made rules were far more difficult and detailed than God's rules! (See [MacArthur's description](#) of some of the outlandish rules related to the Sabbath). If the Pharisees' were alive today, their theme song would likely be **Teveye's "Tradition"** in **Fiddler on the Roof**, a good song but a bad practice.

**THOUGHT** - In their self deception in their zealous adherence to men's traditions the scribes and Pharisees thought they were worshipping God by keeping all of the rules, when in fact they were thoroughly displeasing to God! That's what "religion" without relationship will do. And we can fall into the same trap today, thinking if we go to church on Sunday, that is what God wants us to do. In part that may be true but it is so easy to come to church and miss Jesus by a mile, because we fall into the deception that our **"tradition"** (of being in church every Sunday) will make us acceptable to God. The basic principle of 1 Sa 15:22 still applies "Has the LORD as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams." **God wants our hearts.** David affirms this

principle writing "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; A broken and a contrite heart, O God, You will not despise." (Ps 51:17+) The Pharisees were not broken in spirit nor contrite in heart, but were prideful in spirit and heart and that is why they failed to recognize the Messiah of Israel! Beware of religious **traditions** (rituals)!

**Tradition** (3862) see note above on [paradosis](#)

**Phillips** - The Lord did not deny that the disciples had transgressed the Pharisees' tradition; He simply swept it aside and vindicated the disciples for ignoring it. Not only was the tradition worthless; it violated the law of God. (Exploring Matthew)

**Henry Morris** - The Lord severely rebuked the Pharisees for ignoring the clear teachings and commands of Scripture in favor of their own self-serving interpretations and traditions. This unfortunate practice is as prevalent among modern Christians as among ancient Jews, and would surely draw the same rebuke today if He were here in the flesh. In fact, we today are more culpable than they, because we have far more evidence of the inerrant authority of His Word than the Pharisees had.

**J Vernon McGee** - The scribes and the Pharisees had come all the way from Jerusalem. In the previous chapter we saw that Jesus and His disciples were way out in a desert place where the crowds couldn't even get to a hamburger stand; so He had fed them. On the surface it may seem like a wonderful thing that the religious rulers had come all the way out to listen to Him. Well, frankly, they hadn't come all the way out to applaud Him or to accept His teaching; they had come to criticize Him. Immediately we recognize that this was not a friendly visit. They did not accuse Him of breaking the Scriptures but of violating the traditions which they considered to be on a par with the Scriptures. They wanted to know why His disciples did not wash their hands. They were referring to a ceremonial cleansing rather than to what we would consider a physical or sanitary washing. There are a great many people who feel that if you go through some sort of an outward ceremony and clean up on the outside, this is all that is necessary.

**ILLUSTRATION OF THE DANGER OF TRADITION** - You've seen many moms place a very thin blanket over their babies in their strollers (keep the sun off). But what would happen if they just kept placing blanket after blanket. It doesn't matter how thin these blankets are...the baby would suffocate. Over the years the Pharisees had overlaid the biblical teaching with vast amounts of spoken teaching "blankets" and oral tradition "blankets." Though admirable, the original aim of protecting the baby, became its demise! (Brian Bell)

**ILLUSTRATION** - I have here an old pocket watch. It looks like any other pocket watch. It has a case, hands and a face. It has a chain and all the requisite parts that are necessary for it to carry out its function as a timepiece. However, there is a problem with this watch. You see, it just won't run! Why not? It won't run because it has a problem with its heart. Inside this case, there is a spring that is the heart of this watch. That spring is essential to the proper operation of this watch as a timepiece. That spring, the heart of this watch, is defective! The heart of the problem with this watch is a problem of the heart of this watch. There are plenty of people in the church and in religious circles who are just like this watch. On the outside they look fine. They appear to be religious and they do good things, but they cannot function as they were designed to function. They cannot truly worship God and bring glory to Him because they have a problem that cannot be readily seen by a mere surface inspection of their life. They have a problem with their heart! ([Alan Carr](#)) Carr ends his sermon with these words - "Remember my broken watch? I can have it fixed. A good watchmaker can repair the problem in the heart of this watch and make right again. If there is a problem in your heart this morning, Jesus Christ can take it like it is and He can make it like it ought to be! According to the prophet Ezekiel, God can take away our faulty "hearts of stone" and replace them with new ones that will beat in turn with God's own heart, Ezekiel. 36:26+. He can save us from the deceptive work of our own heart!"

**Matthew 15:4 "For God said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER,' and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH.'**

NET Matthew 15:4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Whoever insults his father or mother must be put to death.'

NLT Matthew 15:4 For instance, God says, 'Honor your father and mother,' and 'Anyone who speaks disrespectfully of father or mother must be put to death.'

ESV Matthew 15:4 For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.'

NIV Matthew 15:4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

GNT Matthew 15:4 γ ρ θε ς ε πεν, Τ μα τ ν πατ ρα κα τ ν μητ ρα, κα , κακολογ υ πατ ρα μητ ρα θαν τ

ΤΕΛΕΥΤ ΤΩ.

KJV Matthew 15:4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

- **God:** Mt 4:10 5:17-19 Isa 8:20 Ro 3:31
- **Honor:** Mt 19:19 Ex 20:12 Lev 19:3 De 5:16 Pr 23:22 Eph 6:1
- **He:** Ex 21:17 Lev 20:9 De 21:18-21 27:16 Pr 20:20 30:17
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 7:10+ (PARALLEL PASSAGE) "For Moses said, 'HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER'; and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER, IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH';

Exodus 20:12+ "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Deuteronomy 5:16; Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, that your days may be prolonged and that it may go well with you on the land which the LORD your God gives you.

Exodus 21:17+ "He who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

Leviticus 20:9+ 'If there is anyone who curses his father or his mother, he shall surely be put to death; he has cursed his father or his mother, his bloodguiltiness is upon him.

Deuteronomy 27:16 'Cursed is he who dishonors his father or mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'

Proverbs 20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.

Proverbs 30:17 The eye that mocks a father And scorns a mother, The ravens of the valley will pick it out, And the young eagles will eat it.

### JESUS DIRECTS THEIR ATTENTION TO THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

**For** - Term of explanation. Always ask the Spirit to help you discern what the writer (speaker) is explaining. In this case Jesus is elaborating on the empty, traditional worship of the religious leaders. How sad to be accused of worthless worship by the Lord of lords, but now He gives these hard of hearing leaders a clear explanation of their hypocrisy.

**God said** - Notice that Mark 7:11+ has **Moses said** and Matthew 15:4 has "**God said**" indicating that what **Moses said** was what he had been inspired by the Spirit to say (cf 2 Peter 1:21+).

**THOUGHT** - It is notable that Jesus repeatedly uses the Scriptures when addressing false teaching, etc. This is a good practice for all us His followers to imitate. And it just another reason we should all be actively memorizing the Word of Truth!

**HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER** - **Honor** is [timao](#) in the [present imperative](#) which calls for continual, unhesitating tangible demonstration of reverence and respect to one's parents (see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#)). **Paul** adds that this fifth commandment "is the first commandment with a promise" (Ephesians 6:2+) which should motivate one to obediently put it into practice. Thus you would expect that these religious leaders would surely seek to obey this fifth of ten Commandments since it came pre-packaged with a promise of long life in the land! But sadly they had allowed their imperfect traditional teachings from sinful men to take precedence over the perfect Law of the Holy God!

**Honor** ([5091](#))([timao](#) from **time** = honor, prize) means to show high regard respect for and so to count as valuable, to esteem, to value, to revere. To show respect to someone is to recognize their worth as a person (and if they are a parent to recognize the validity of their role and their authority). To honor is to manifest an attitude of love, respect, and disposition of one's heart which in the context of God or the child/parent relationship yields the fruit of obedience. Lenski comments that to honor reflects "the form love assumes towards those who are placed above us by God." All uses of timao in Matthew - Matt. 15:4; Matt. 15:6; Matt. 15:8; Matt. 19:19; Matt. 27:9. "The word translated "**honor**" includes the idea of supporting aged parents, as in 1 Timothy 5:3. It is not enough to give verbal respect to parents. Honoring them means providing for their physical needs where necessary." (Phillips)

and, 'HE WHO SPEAKS EVIL OF FATHER OR MOTHER IS TO BE PUT TO DEATH' - So not only was there a blessing for honoring parents, there was also a curse for dishonoring them! And in spite of this "double motivation" to keep this commandment, the religious leaders opted for the traditions of men! Clearly there was no fear of God before their eyes!

**Speaks evil** is **kakologeo** which literally means speak evil and thus to use unjustified, abusive, reviling, insulting language. This is not just an occasional talking back (most of us did this a few times as children!), but is in the [present tense](#) indicating this evil speaking was ongoing, habitual and habitual. See the **commentary** on Exodus 21:17 for a more detailed discussion of this seemingly severe punishment for speaking evil of parents.

**Speaks evil** (2551) **kakologeo** from **kakos** = evil + **lego** = to speak) means literally to speak evil of, to curse (e.g., of parents in Mt 15:4, Mk 7:10). **Kakologeo** means to use unjustified and abusive language against someone. **Kakologeo** is used in Mark 9:39 in regard to someone who was casting out demons. **Louw-Nida** says **kakologeo** means to revile or "to insult in a particularly strong and unjustified manner." The derivative word **katalogos** was a "slanderer." Hellenistically, **kakologeo** means to imprecate evil on, to curse someone (Lxx - Pr. 20:20; Ezek 22:7; Ex 22:28).

**Be put to death** is verb **teleutao** "to come to an end." plus **thanatos** meaning death. Thus, the Greek is literally, "Let him come to an end by death."

**Brian Bell** points out in this section (Mt 15:3-9) we see 4 steps - (1) Replacing (Mt 15:8, heart for lips). (2) Neglecting (Mt 15:3,4 God's commandments). (3) Rejecting (Mt 15:6, God's commandments). (4) Invalidating (Mt 15:9, in vain you worship Me). What a false confidence man's traditions have given to so many sincere people. Sincere, but sincerely wrong. a) As if what you do on the outside, will somehow change the inside.

Now ponder this scene a moment. Jesus is quoting the writings of Moses which the Pharisees claimed to revere, so they may have even been nodding their approval. But Jesus is setting a trap for these "vipers" and proceeds to shut the trap door in the next passage!

**Matthew 15:5 "But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God,"**

NET Matthew 15:5 But you say, 'If someone tells his father or mother, "Whatever help you would have received from me is given to God,"

NLT Matthew 15:5 But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.'

ESV Matthew 15:5 But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God,"

NIV Matthew 15:5 But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,'

GNT Matthew 15:5 με ς δ λ γετε, ς ν ε π τ πατρ τ μητρ, Δ ρον ν ξ μο φεληθ ς,

KJV Matthew 15:5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;

- **say:** Mt 23:16-18 Am 7:15-17 Mk 7:10-13 Ac 4:19 5:29
- **has been given to God:** Lev 27:9-34 Pr 20:25 Mk 7:11,12
- **[Matthew 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Mark 7:11+ but you say, 'If a man says to his father or his mother, whatever I have that would help you is Corban (that is to say, given to God),' 12 you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother;

**CHRIST CONFRONTS  
CRUEL CON OF CORBAN**

**But you say** - Term of contrast. What is Jesus contrasting? Check the immediate context for the answer. Did you notice **God said** versus **you say**?

**THOUGHT** - "Actually, if you ever hear yourself use the word "but" after referring to the Bible, you should hear alarms going off because whatever you say next is going to be unbiblical and therefore wrong." ([Brian Bill](#))

**Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God** - How pious this sounds! Mark 7:11+ adds "whatever I have that would help you is **Corban** (that is to say, given to God)." And so to get out of the obligation to one's parents one could simply say "Corban" over his possessions. "That vow absolved him from the present duty of helping his parents. He had put his material possessions under a sacred umbrella, so to speak, and the claim of the fifth commandment was superseded by the vow." (Phillips) Withholding money (or any other benefit) from needy parents in order to give it to God is in direct disobedience to God and is dishonoring God's Word and substituting a man-made tradition for God's Word. Basic human needs come first with God before religious offerings.

**Help** (profit) ([5623](#))([opheleo](#) from [ophéllō](#) = heap up or from [ophelos](#) = increase, profit) means to provide assistance, with emphasis upon the resulting benefit. To help, to be of benefit, to be of use, to be an advantage, to be advantageous. **Opheleo** is used in the sense of "bringing or gaining spiritual benefit" in Jn 6:63; 1Co. 13: 3; 14:6; Gal. 5: 2; Heb. 4: 2; 13:9. Opheleo occurs in the question "What does it profit a person ... ?" in Mt 16:26; Mk 8:36; Lk 9:25.

**Given** ([1435](#))([doron](#)) is that which is given or granted and stresses the gratuitous character of the gift. Anything given or bestowed. A gift is something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation. Something presented as an act of worship and/or devotion (Mt 2:11). **Doron** is used of offerings to God except in Eph 2:8 and Rev 11:10. In classical Greek doron referred to a votive (expressing a vow, wish or desire) gift or offering to a god (little g) or a gift from the gods, as well as a present given as a tribute or even as a bribe. Of the 166+ uses of doron in the non-apocryphal Septuagint, most are used in the context of an offering to God (cf Ge 4:4, Lev 1:2, 3, 10, 2:1, Nu 5:15, Dt 12:11, 1Chr 16:29, Jer 33:11, etc).

Simply by saying "**Corban**" over a gift, a son could be freed of the obligation of having to give the gift to their needy parents! In essence the Pharisees and their evil traditions were promoting sinful behavior by sons! Talk about being deluded by doctrines of men! These Pharisees had no concept of the truth of God nor of the true and Living God. That's the deadly effect tradition can have on a heart! The heart becomes so unbelieving, so hardened, that it thinks it is doing right when in fact it is actually doing wrong. This is exactly what happened in the horrible days of the Judges where we read "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes. (NOTICE EVEN THOUGH THEY DID WRONG, THERE WERE SO DECEIVED, THEY THOUGHT THEY WERE DOING RIGHT!)" (Jdg 21:25+).

**R T France** - "This convenient declaration apparently left the property actually still at the disposal of the one who made the vow, but deprived his parents of any right to it."

**ILLUSTRATION** - Actor and comedian W. C. Fields was an avowed agnostic, so he surprised his friends when they discovered him reading a Bible while on his deathbed. When asked why, Fields replied, "I'm looking for a loophole." Corban was the loophole for the Pharisees!

**Brian Bill** - If someone pronounced something, "Corban," it became sacred and therefore could not be used to help care for parents. It was like a deferred gift that was pledged to the Temple but in many cases, it was never given. And since Numbers 30:2 warns against breaking a vow, once someone declared something Corban, they could never change their mind. It was actually a rather convenient and sinister way to look spiritual and yet get out of one of God's clear commands.

**Chuck Smith** - But you say, "Well, it's Corban. I've given that to God; you can't have that." And you could actually wipe out any obligation you had to a person by saying, "Anything I owe you is Corban. That is, it's dedicated to God, and therefore you can't have it." And by these traditions, they were actually negating the law of God. ([Commentary](#))

Paul gives some strong words to those who fail to help their needy parents...

But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, **he has denied the faith** and is worse than an unbeliever. (1 Timothy 5:8)

**J Vernon McGee** - I still believe the best way to test a Christian is by his pocketbook. The barometer of the Christian today is how he handles his own money and how he handles God's money. The religious rulers of Jesus' day were helping men escape their responsibility.

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**Question** - [What does Corban mean in Mark 7:11?](#)

**Answer:** The word Corban is only found in Mark 7:11. The interpretation is given in the same verse: “devoted to God as a gift.” The word described something to be offered to God or given to the sacred treasury in the temple. If something was “Corban,” it was dedicated and set apart for God’s use.

In the context of Mark 7:1-13, Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees about ritual without reality. The Pharisees had asked why the disciples did not wash their hands according to the ritualistic tradition of the elders (Mark 7:5). This hand-washing was not what we think of today with soap and water. It was not for cleanliness; rather, it was a prescribed ritual done as a show of piety.

In answer to the Pharisees’ question, Jesus told them that they had rejected the commandment of God in order to keep their own tradition (Mark 7:6-9). Jesus gives the proof of their corruption of the Law by citing their use of “Corban.” Moses had instructed God’s people to “honor their father and mother” (Exodus 20:12), but the Pharisees negated that command by teaching that they could give money to the temple in lieu of helping their parents in need. Whatever money might have been used to provide for aging parents could be dedicated to the temple treasury instead. Saying, “It is Corban” would exempt a person from his responsibility to his parents. In other words, the Pharisees took a legitimate Corban offering and used it in an illegitimate and devious way to defraud their parents (and enrich themselves). Thus, the Law of God was nullified.

Jesus tells the Pharisees that their misuse of Corban was an evil rationale to avoid doing what they should. God never intended that the good principle of devoting something to the temple should be twisted to dishonor fathers and mothers. Ritual without reality is what the Pharisaic religion was all about. It was also ritual without righteousness and without relationship. Jesus taught that, without a personal relationship with God, ritual profits nothing, and the traditions of man should never usurp the authority of God’s Word. [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

**Matthew 15:6 he is not to honor his father or his mother.' And by this you invalidated the word of God for the sake of your tradition.**

NET Matthew 15:6 he does not need to honor his father.' You have nullified the word of God on account of your tradition.

NLT Matthew 15:5 But you say it is all right for people to say to their parents, 'Sorry, I can't help you. For I have vowed to give to God what I would have given to you.' 6 In this way, you say they don't need to honor their parents. And so you cancel the word of God for the sake of your own tradition.

ESV Matthew 15:6 he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God.

NIV Matthew 15:6 he is not to 'honor his father ' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.

GNT Matthew 15:6 ο μ τιμ σει τ ν πατ ρα α το - κα κυρ σατε τ ν λ γον το θεο δι τ ν παρ δοσιν μ ν.

KJV Matthew 15:6 And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

- **honor** : 1Ti 5:3,4,8,16
- **by this you invalidated the word of God**: Ps 119:126,139 Jer 8:8 Ho 4:6 Mal 2:7-9 Mk 7:13 Ro 3:31
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Mark 7:12-13+ you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or his mother; thus invalidating the word of God by your tradition which you have handed down; and you do many things such as that.”

### JESUS' WORDS CUT TO THEIR EVIL HEARTS

**He is not to honor his father or his mother** - The person who says this money is for God (and in so doing justifies his not have to give it to his parents) is directly countering the clear commandment of God calling for one to honor parents.

**Honor** (5091) see above on [timaos](#)

**And by this you invalidated the Word of God for the sake of your tradition- By this**, that is, by invoking this tradition ([corban](#)) their vow would essentially "cancel out" God's commandment. And here Jesus says the reason they do this is so they can hold to their man made **tradition**. In short, Jesus is saying that in their practices, the **tradition** of men trumps the clear, unambiguous **Word of God**! This has to be the height of hubris, which is not surprising for the scribes and Pharisees were proud of their pride and looked down on their fellow Jews! (e.g. read Lk 18:10-14+)

**Invalidated** (208) ([akuroo](#) from **a** = without + **kuroo** = to confirm) was a legal technical term meaning to make invalid or void, to annul (Gal 3:17+) It means to cancel, deprive of power. Used in Mt 15:6 and Mk 7:13+ describing depriving divine law of authority (and power) by placing priority on human traditions! In the OT only in the apocryphal writings - 1 Es. 6:31; 4 Ma. 2:1; 4 Ma. 2:3; 4 Ma. 2:18; 4 Ma. 5:18; 4 Ma. 7:14; 4 Ma. 17:2

**THOUGHT** - One of the meanings of the Greek verb **invalidated** is to deprive of power! What Jesus is saying in effect as their traditions and legalism negate the power of the Word! Ponder that thought regarding the effect of **traditions** (and legalism in general) on the power of the Word of God! **Traditions** of men are legalistic burdens and Jesus says they counteract the Word of Truth. In John 8:31-32 "Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free." But here Jesus is saying in essence that the **traditions** of men will blunt the liberating effect of the truth of the Word of God and will cut off the flow of grace because of legalistic rules! (see [note below](#)) Are you trying to live the Christian life by keeping rules? If so you are blunting the power of the Word of God and the flow of grace and enabling power of the Spirit (Read Gal 3:2-3+)

**Tradition** (3862) see note above on [paradosis](#)

**William MacDonald makes a great point** - One of the great lessons in this passage is that we must constantly test all teaching and all tradition by the Word of God, obeying what is of God and rejecting what is of men. At first a man may teach and preach a clear, scriptural message, gaining acceptance among Bible-believing people. Having gained this acceptance, he begins to add some human teaching. His devoted followers who have come to feel that he can do no wrong follow him blindly, even if his message blunts the sharp edge of the Word or waters down its clear meaning. It was thus that the scribes and Pharisees had gained authority as teachers of the Word. But they were now nullifying the intent of the Word. The Lord Jesus had to warn the people that it is the Word that accredits men, not men who accredit the Word. The great touchstone must always be, "What does the Word say?" (BBC)

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**Brian Bill** draws some conclusions from Jesus' confrontation of the deadly effect of the traditions of men - A legalist is one who believes that performance is the way to gain favor with God. Legalism is the human attempt to gain salvation or prove our spirituality by outward conformity to a list of religious "do's" and "don'ts." It's often disguised in spiritual beliefs and behavior. Here are some observations about legalism. You may want tighten your seatbelt because we're about to go through some turbulence.

**1. We tend to think others are legalistic, but that we're not.**

The fact is that we're all legalistic by nature. We tend to judge others by our own standards of what is acceptable and what isn't. In essence, we think our sins smell better than other people's because we have very little tolerance for people who sin differently than we do.

**2. Legalism is highly contagious.**

While it's usually less conscious and systematized in our minds than it was among the Pharisees and the scribes, legalism can spread like a bad virus through an entire congregation. That's why Jesus reserved some of his harshest criticism for legalistic list-makers.

**3. Legalism can take a vibrant faith and make it dull and lifeless.**

It can evaporate enthusiasm, jettison joy, and stifle spirituality. Instead of finding freedom through Christ, many believers become burdened by a bunch of rules and regulations.

**4. Legalism produces large quantities of self-righteousness, judgment and condemnation.**

It majors in guilt and misguided sacrifice, urging its followers to evaluate their relationship with God on the basis of standards and scores – and expects others to do the same. Superficial spirituality short-circuits the work of grace.

**5. Legalism makes us narrow and divisive.**



The legalist insists that everyone live up to the standard they have adopted. In other words, everyone needs to be like me. When we think this way, we miss the delight of diversity in the church.

## 6. Legalism makes it impossible for people to see Jesus.

There is nothing that pushes someone away faster than a list of rules and regulations when we inadvertently portray Jesus as a drill sergeant instead of the Savior.

**Most of us fall into legalism without trying to do so.** Let me illustrate.

Several years ago I asked a woman from China and a man from Puerto Rico to lead us in prayer for the persecuted church (By the way, we'll hear from the Puerto Rico Go Team next weekend). It was beautiful to hear Hector pray for the persecuted in Spanish. When Stella prayed in Mandarin, she told us she was going to kneel and very graciously invited us to do the same, if we wanted to. I followed her lead and knelt. My motives were good initially as we interceded for the needs of beleaguered believers around the world. But then I took a peek and noticed only a small number were on their knees. A seed of judgmentalism began to germinate, as I secretly wondered why others weren't as spiritual as I was. Now, work with me on this. Imagine that because I found kneeling to be so helpful, I began kneeling during my quiet times. When I led in prayer in services I knelt as well. And then I started telling everyone else they had to kneel when they prayed. I might even quote some Scripture. And when I didn't see people kneeling I started to feel angry but also spiritually smug because at least I was doing what everyone else should be doing. Do you see how subtle and sneaky legalism is? Its weeds are under the surface in each of our lives. Kneeling to pray is a good thing but it can easily become the standard by which we judge other people's spirituality. In short, if we're not careful we'll default to a performance-based, hypocritical kind of faith. By the way, there are other acceptable prayer postures in the Bible – sitting, standing, lying down, bowing, hands in the air or praying to stay awake during sermons.

One of the best ways to not slide into spiritual superficiality and ritualistic religion is by serving those in need. James 1:27 says: "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

### Matthew 15:7 "You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you:"

NET Matthew 15:7 Hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied correctly about you when he said,

NLT Matthew 15:7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you, for he wrote,

ESV Matthew 15:7 You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

NIV Matthew 15:7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

GNT Matthew 15:7 ποκριτα , καλ ς προφ τευσεν περ μ ν σα ας λ γων,

KJV Matthew 15:7 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,

- **hypocrites:** Mt 7:5 23:23-29
- **rightly:** Mk 7:6 Ac 28:25-27
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## STINGING SARCASM FROM THE SAVIOR

**Webster** defines **hypocrisy** as "a feigning to be what one is not or to believe what one does not; especially the false assumption of an appearance of virtue or religion"

**Phillips** comments "The Lord was not through. He followed up His challenge with a quotation from Isaiah 29:13. The Pharisees said that their tradition was weightier than Scripture, but the Lord authoritatively referred them to Scripture and bluntly called them hypocrites." The quotation was particularly appropriate, as were all the Lord's references to Scripture, for it ruled out tradition. Isaiah of course prophesied long before the Babylonian captivity, long before the days of Ezra and the scribes, long before the beginning of the **system of traditional teaching** that in the end produced the Talmud. (Exploring Matthew)

**You hypocrites** - This is the first time Jesus declares the religious leaders are hypocrites! It is notable that this designation hypocrite is always spoken by the Lord Himself, showing His ability to discern the inner motives of men. The idea is that these men

are "play-actors" morally speaking, acting in pretense for their words and deeds were in opposition to their inner motives.

**Knox Chamblin** - There is a contradiction between the appearance ("These people honor me with their lips") and the reality ("but their hearts are far from me"). Their desire to enthrone man both requires and results in distance from God. They do not merely neglect God's word; determined to enthrone themselves in place of God, they must replace God's word with "rules taught by men." In quoting Isa, Jesus not only appeals (as in v. 4) to divine revelation in face of human tradition; he associates the alleged bearers of OT tradition not with the prophet of judgment but with the objects of judgment!

**Brian Bell** - You folks have turned religion into play-acting. We (all) are hypocritical when we talk about love but never love; Talk about forgiving but never forgive; Talk about witnessing but never witness.

**Hypocrites** (5273) (**hupokrites** from **hupó** = under, indicating secrecy + **krino** = to judge) describes one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character. A hypocrite is someone who pretends to be something he or she is not. The word hypocrisy comes from the Greek theater and referred to the practice of putting on a mask and playing a part on stage. It originally conveyed the idea of playing the playing a part on the stage and described the actor's art. The NT always gives this word a negative connotation referring to duplicity or the quality of being double - belying of one's true intentions by deceptive words or action). The idea is these men are pretenders, acting as those they were not, which reflects their deceitful hearts. Their public display of piety and pismo was at odds their real purposes. In short, these religious leaders were "play-acting" (so to speak). **Vincent** adds that a **hypokrites** is "one who acts pretentiously, a counterfeit, a man who assumes and speaks or acts under a feigned character."

**Wuest** adds that "The Greek word for "**hypocrite**" was used of an actor on the Greek stage, one who played the part of another. The word means literally, "to judge under," and was used of someone giving off his judgment from behind a screen or mask... The true identity of the person is covered up. It refers to acts of impersonation or deception. It was used of an actor on the Greek stage. Taken over into the New Testament, it referred to a person we call a hypocrite, one who assumes the mannerisms, speech, and character of someone else, thus hiding his true identity. Christianity requires that believers should be open and above-board. They should be themselves. Their lives should be like an open book, easily read." (**Ibid**)

It is notable that all 18 uses in the NT are in the Gospels - Matt. 6:2; Matt. 6:5; Matt. 6:16; Matt. 7:5; Matt. 15:7; Matt. 22:18; Matt. 23:13; Matt. 23:14; Matt. 23:15; Matt. 23:23; Matt. 23:25; Matt. 23:27; Matt. 23:29; Matt. 24:51; Mk. 7:6; Lk. 6:42; Lk. 12:56; Lk. 13:15

**Rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you** - "Well did Isaiah prophesy of you." (ESV) **Rightly** is **kalos** which means "beautifully." Jesus is using a touch of sarcasm as He applies the words from Isaiah 29:13 to the religious leaders. 700 years earlier the Spirit inspired writings looked down the corridors of time and saw the evil practices of these first century Jewish religious leaders.

**J Vernon McGee** - The Lord called the scribes and Pharisees hypocrites. This is the most frightful word in Scripture. Nothing quite corresponds to it, but it did not have quite the meaning in that day that it does today. To us it is a scorching word, but in Jesus' day it simply meant to answer back and was used of an actor in a play. It means that an actor would receive a cue and then answer back. Jesus accused the scribes and Pharisees of playing at religion. The religious leaders were eager to have people go through the ceremony of washing their hands, but they ignored the condition of the heart, which was the important thing to God. In a very pious way they were breaking the Mosaic Law. My friend, we also are pretty good at rationalizing. Parents say to their children, "You wash your hands before you come to the table," but they pay no attention to what their children see on television, which is the thing that is damaging the heart. Oh, of course, children should wash their hands, but what is on the inside is far more important.

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**John MacArthur** has an excellent commentary on this section - An ancient rabbi said, "There are ten parts of hypocrisy in the world, nine at Jerusalem and one everywhere else." The same might be said of much of the church. Satan has no greater allies than hypocrites who go under the guise of God's people. And hypocrites have no greater ally than tradition, because tradition can be followed mechanically and thoughtlessly, without conviction, sincerity, or purity of heart. Because traditions are made by men, they can be accomplished by men. They require no faith, no trust, no dependence on God. Not only that, but they appeal to the flesh by feeding pride and self-righteousness. Often, as in this case, they also serve self-interest.

Because traditions require no integrity of heart, they are easily substituted for true worship and obedience. That is why it is easy for people to honor God with their lips while their heart is far away from Him. And that is why ritual, ceremony, and other religious traditions are more likely to take worshipers further from God than bring them closer. And the further a person is from God, the more vain his worship becomes.

The only heart that can worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24) is the heart that belongs to Him; and the only heart that belongs to Him is the heart cleansed from sin and made righteous by Him. It is this divine cleansing that God has always offered to those who trust in Him. “I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you,” He said through Ezekiel, “and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances” (Ezek. 36:26–27). Unless that transformation happens within a person, his righteousness cannot exceed the hypocritical and superficial righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees—in which case he can never enter the kingdom of God (Matt. 5:20). (MNTC-Mtthew)

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**Question - [What does the Bible say about hypocrisy?](#)**

**Answer:** In essence, “hypocrisy” refers to the act of claiming to believe something but acting in a different manner. The word is derived from the Greek term for “actor”—literally, “one who wears a mask”—in other words, someone who pretends to be what he is not.

The Bible calls hypocrisy a sin. There are two forms hypocrisy can take: that of professing belief in something and then acting in a manner contrary to that belief, and that of looking down on others when we ourselves are flawed.

The prophet Isaiah condemned the hypocrisy of his day: “The Lord says, ‘These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by men’” (Isaiah 29:13). Centuries later, Jesus quoted this verse, aiming the same condemnation at the religious leaders of His day (Matthew 15:8-9). John the Baptist refused to give hypocrites a pass, telling them to produce “fruits worthy of repentance” (Luke 3:8). Jesus took an equally staunch stand against sanctimony—He called hypocrites “wolves in sheep’s clothing” (Matthew 7:15), “whitewashed tombs” (Matthew 23:27), “snakes,” and “brood of vipers” (Matthew 23:33).

We cannot say we love God if we do not love our brothers (1 John 2:9). Love must be “without hypocrisy” (Romans 12:9, NKJV). A hypocrite may look righteous on the outside, but it is a façade. True righteousness comes from the inner transformation of the Holy Spirit not an external conformity to a set of rules (Matthew 23:5; 2 Corinthians 3:8).

Jesus addressed the other form of hypocrisy in the Sermon on the Mount: “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye” (Matthew 7:3-5). Jesus is not teaching against discernment or helping others overcome sin; instead, He is telling us not be so prideful and convinced of our own goodness that we criticize others from a position of self-righteousness. We should do some introspection first and correct our own shortcomings before we go after the “specks” in others (cf. Romans 2:1).

During Jesus’ earthly ministry, He had many run-ins with the religious leaders of the day, the Pharisees. These men were well versed in the Scriptures and zealous about following every letter of the Law (Acts 26:5). However, in adhering to the letter of the Law, they actively sought loopholes that allowed them to violate the spirit of the Law. Also, they displayed a lack of compassion toward their fellow man and were often overly demonstrative of their so-called spirituality in order to garner praise (Matthew 23:5–7; Luke 18:11). Jesus denounced their behavior in no uncertain terms, pointing out that “justice, mercy, and faithfulness” are more important than pursuing a perfection based on faulty standards (Matthew 23:23). Jesus made it clear that the problem was not with the Law but the way in which the Pharisees implemented it (Matthew 23:2-3). Today, the word pharisee has become synonymous with hypocrite.

It must be noted that hypocrisy is not the same as taking a stand against sin. For example, it is not hypocrisy to teach that drunkenness is a sin, unless the one teaching against drunkenness gets drunk every weekend—that would be hypocrisy.

As children of God, we are called to strive for holiness (1 Peter 1:16). We are to “hate what is evil” and “cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9). We should never imply an acceptance of sin, especially in our own lives. All we do should be consistent with what we believe and who we are in Christ. Play-acting is meant for the stage, not for real life. [GotQuestions.org](#)

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**Matthew 15:8 'THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS, BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME.**

NET Matthew 15:8 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me,

NLT Matthew 15:8 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

ESV Matthew 15:8 ""This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;

NIV Matthew 15:8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

GNT Matthew 15:8 λα ρ ο τος το ρ χε λεσ ν με τιμ , δ καρδ α α τ ν π ρω π χει π μο ·

KJV Matthew 15:8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.

- **HONORS ME:** Isa 29:13 Eze 33:31 Joh 1:47 1Pe 3:10
- **BUT THEIR HEART:** Pr 23:26 Jer 12:2 Ac 8:21 Heb 3:12
- **[Matthew 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## LIP SERVICE FROM HYPOCRITES

**THIS PEOPLE HONORS ME WITH THEIR LIPS** - A modern saying is they give God "[lip service](#)," but lack life submission. It is good to honor God with one's lips, but only if our words truly reflect the worship in our heart! These men are all words and show! The leaders continually made profession that they were honoring Yahweh! One is reminded of Paul's description of hypocrites who "profess ([present tense](#) - continually) to know God, BTU by their deeds (THEIR PRACTICE, THEIR "ROTTEN" FRUIT) they deny ([present tense](#) = CONTINUALLY DENY) Him, being detestable ([bdekluktos](#) from bdeo = TO STINK!) and disobedient and worthless for any good deed. (Titus 1:16+) In short, their earthly life is essentially USELESS in regard to eternal things. That is sad, but is the sad truth of every unbeliever, not matter how grand their earthly accomplishments!

**What the Bible Teaches** - The pharisaical mouth and lips would engage in the synagogue services, appearing to be justified before men, but known to be otherwise by God; what is outwardly esteemed by men is regarded by God as an abomination (Luke 16:15), (this word being the same as that describing the image set up by the anti-Christ, Matt 24:15). Compare the words spoken to God by the Pharisee in the parable (Luke 18:11-12); there was no justification from God since the heart was far from Him.

**Brian Bell** - There is a big difference between tradition and truth -- Tradition is outward; Truth is inward. Tradition has to do w/ritual; Truth has to do w/reality. Tradition is something you keep; Truth is something that keeps you. What a tragedy that religious people would ignorantly practice their religion and become worse for doing it. Jesus doesn't say, well as long as you're *sincere*! (ED: Because you can be sincerely wrong and end up in Hell!)

**Honors** ([5091](#)) see above on [timaο](#)

**BUT** - Term of contrast. A "but" usually "changes direction," and in this case the meaning is clear from the context.

**THEIR HEART IS FAR AWAY FROM ME** - "Isaiah's words struck at the heart of the Pharisaic system, which pretended to love God, yet worshiped Him in a way that was superficial, contrived, unbiblical, and unacceptable." (MacArthur) Notice Jesus' association of **lips** with **heart**, a relationship He will explain in more detail in His parabolic saying in Mark 7:14-23+.

**THOUGHT** - Yet it may also be true of us. We can appear to draw near to God, all the while having our heart far from Him. It is easy to want and be impressed by the image of being near to God without really doing it with our heart.. God is interested in the internal and the real. We are far more interested in the merely external and image. One must take care that their relationship with God is not merely external and image. (Guzik)

**Alan Carr** sums up this verse - **A Religious Showing Does Not Indicate Spiritual Worship** v. 8 - Just because a person goes to church, sings the songs, bows in prayer and listens to a sermon does not mean that they have truly worshiped! Just because you go to church and do churchy things does not mean that you are genuinely saved! You see, every person in this room is religious. That is evident from the fact that they are in church today. But, not every person here has been redeemed! Only those who have trusted Jesus as their personal Savior can claim that blessing, John 3:3; John 14:6!

**Brian Bell** - **Heart is far from Me** – You can't think your way into the kingdom of God. Christianity is a rational faith, a reasonable faith, but you do not get into the kingdom head first. You get into the kingdom heart first!

**THOUGHT** - What traditions will we hand down to the next generation, yet consider them doctrine? We shouldn't pass on Non-Essentials; we must pass on Jesus. (Bell)

**Far** is **porro** which means a great way off, at a distance. The verb "**is...away from**" is [apecho](#) (apo = "off from + echō = to have or hold, thus literally = "to hold off from") which in this context speaks of continual ([present tense](#)) separation in space or distance from a person, in this case from the Person of God. Note also that [apecho](#) is in the [active voice](#) which means this their volitional choice, the continual choice of their will! They are far off because they want to be! Woe! That is a frightening thought!

See other passages describing heart **far from God** - Ps 78:35,36 Isa 48:1 Eze 33:31, 32 Mt 7:21 Mk 7:6 Lu

6:46 1 Jn 3:18 Titus 1:16, Jas 1:22-25) Circumcision was the mark of the covenant given to Abraham, and it was looked on with the greatest possible reverence by Jews. The heart of Israel's rebellion against God had always been her heart and even before the people of Israel entered the Promised Land, God declared through Moses they needed a "circumcised" heart.

Deuteronomy 10:12; 13; 16 "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul,<sup>13</sup> and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?...<sup>16</sup> "So circumcise your heart, and stiffen your neck no longer. (Dt 10:12,13, 16).

**Note** - The OT repeatedly declares that the only religious ceremony or activity that pleases God is that which comes from a contrite, pure, and loving heart (Joshua 24:23; 1Ki 8:23; 2Chr 11:16; Isa 51:7; 57:15, Ps 51:17).

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## Looks Can Be Deceiving

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. —Matthew 15:8

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:1-11

On June 22, 2002, a 33-year-old pitching star for the St. Louis Cardinals was found dead in his Chicago hotel room. He was young, physically active, and appeared to be in good health. However, the autopsy revealed that he had a 90-percent blockage in two of three coronary arteries, an enlarged heart, and a blood clot in one of the arteries. His appearance misled many to think that he was physically healthy.

Jesus said that appearances can deceive people into thinking that they are spiritually healthy. After the Pharisees accused Him and His followers of breaking religious traditions by not washing their hands before they ate, Jesus said that the Pharisees had laid aside commands of God for man-made, religious traditions. He reminded them that kingdom righteousness was not an outside-in job but an inside-out, transforming work of God. Jesus said that they looked impressive spiritually, but their hearts were diseased and distant: "[They] honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me" (Matt. 15:8). Their talk never matched their walk, thus producing the illegitimate child of hypocrisy.

Spiritual health is not determined by how we look, but by how we live. Let's ask God to search us, know our hearts, test us, and lead us in His way (Ps. 139:23-24). By: Marvin Williams ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

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## Agreeing With God

These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. —Matthew 15:8

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:1-9

The caller to the radio program mentioned religion, so the radio talk show host began to rant about hypocrites. "I can't stand religious hypocrites," he said. "They talk about religion, but they're no better than I am. That's why I don't like all this religious stuff."

This man didn't realize it, but he was agreeing with God. God has made it clear that He can't stand hypocrisy either. It's ironic, though, that something God opposes is used by some people as an excuse not to seek Him.

Jesus said this about hypocrisy: "These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8-9).

Notice what Jesus said to perhaps the biggest hypocrites of His day, the Pharisees. In Matthew 23, He called them hypocrites—not once, not twice, but seven times! They were religious people who were putting on a big show, but God knew their hearts. He knew they were far from Him.

Non-Christians who point out hypocrisy in us when they see it are right in doing so. They are agreeing with God, who also despises it. Our task is to make sure our lives honor the One who deserves our total dedication. By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Hypocrisy is a common sin  
That grieves the Lord above;

He longs for those who'll worship Him  
in faith and truth and love.  
—Bosch

The devil is content to let us profess Christianity as long as we do not practice it.

## QUOTES ON HYPOCRISY

From John Blanchard's highly recommended work "Complete Gathered Gold."

Hypocrites are like pictures on canvas: they show fairest at farthest.

Thomas Adams

The hypocrite fries in words, freezes in works.

Thomas Adams

The hypocrite has much angel without, more devil within.

Thomas Adams

The hypocrite is like Hosea's doughbaked cake, only hot on the visible side.

Thomas Adams

Nothing is more amiable than true modesty, and nothing more contemptible than false. The one guards virtue, the other betrays it.

Joseph Addison

I will have nought to do with a man who can blow hot and cold with the same breath.

Aesop

The hypocrite desires holiness only as a bridge to heaven.

Joseph Alleine

A clean glove often hides a dirty hand.

Anon.

A hypocrite is a man who lets his light so shine before men that they can't tell what is going on behind!

Anon.

A hypocrite preaches by the yard but practises by the inch.

Anon.

Many wear God's livery but are not his servants.

Anon.

To profess to love God while leading an unholy life is the worst of falsehoods.

Augustine

The hypocrite's bellows blow out the candle under pretence of kindling the fire.

Richard Baxter

Keeping up appearances is the most expensive thing in the world.

A. C. Benson

A man who hides behind the hypocrite is smaller than the hypocrite.

W. E. Biederwolf

If the world despises a hypocrite, what must they think of him in heaven?

Josh Billings

Hypocrisy is nothing better than skindeep holiness.

John Blanchard

It is possible to be back-slapping and backsliding at the same time.

John Blanchard

Spoken faith is not necessarily saving faith.

John Blanchard

What you are in public will never blind God to what you are in private.

John Blanchard

A man who does not practise what he preaches destroys what he builds.

Bonaventura

An apple, if it be rotten at the core, though it have a fair and shining outside, yet rottenness will not stay long, but will taint the outside also ... hypocrisy will discover itself in the end.

John Bond

God will not be put off with the shell while we give the devil the kernel.

Thomas Brooks

Self-ends are the operative ingredients in all a hypocrite does.

Thomas Brooks

The hypocrite is a cloud without rain, a blossoming tree without fruit, a star without light, a shell without a kernel.

Thomas Brooks

The hypocrite is only constant in inconstancy.

Thomas Brooks

There is not more counterfeit coin this day in the world than there is counterfeit holiness in the world.

Thomas Brooks

Do not seek to cover up your sins with the varnish of hypocrisy, the fine gloss that pleases men.

William C. Burns

Hypocrites are so stupid that they do not feel their sores.

John Calvin

A bad man is worse when he pretends to be a saint.

Oswald Chambers

A hypocrite may well be termed a religious atheist, an atheist masked with religion.

Stephen Charnock

A running sore may lie under a purple robe.

Stephen Charnock

If the devil ever laughs, it must be at hypocrites; they are the greatest dupes he has.

C. C. Colton

Men defend nothing more violently than the pretensions they live by.

Allen Drury

A man can be outwardly conformed to the Christian way of life while he is inwardly conformed to the spirit of this world.

Sinclair Ferguson

A man may have the tongue of an angel and the heart of a devil.

John Flavel

Religion is the best armour in the world, but the worst cloak.

Thomas Fuller

There is nothing worse than being something on the outside that you are not on the inside.

Mohandas Gandhi

There are three things I don't like—they are liver, kidneys and hypocrisy.

A. Lindsay Glegg

Hypocrisy not only covers faults, but swiftly eats out of the soul every remnant of truth and honour left in it.

Richard Glover

Piety outside and corruption inside is a revolting mixture.

Michael Green

Hypocrisy is a lie with a fair cover over it.

William Gurnall

Hypocrisy is a sin that offers violence to the very light of nature.

William Gurnall

Hypocrisy is too thin a veil to blind the eyes of the Almighty.

William Gurnall

We must not spread our sails of profession in a calm and furl them up when the wind rises.

William Gurnall

Many a Christian, many a church, has everything in the showcase and nothing on the shelves.

Vance Havner

There is no use singing of milk and honey, figs and pomegranates, if all we have to show is crab apples!

Vance Havner

Hypocrites and betrayers of Christ are no better than devils.

Matthew Henry

Hypocrites do the devil's drudgery in Christ's livery.

Matthew Henry

Piety from the teeth outward is an easy thing.

Matthew Henry

The day is coming when hypocrites will be stripped of their fig-leaves.

Matthew Henry

Where the hypocrite's work ends, there the true Christian's work begins.

Matthew Henry

A good name upon an unchanged nature is but white feathers upon a black skin.

William Jenkyn

A rotten apple discovers itself in a windy day.

William Jenkyn

Hereafter all paint must fall off which is not laid in the oil of sincerity.

William Jenkyn

There are many who are lip-servants but not life-servants.

William Jenkyn

How difficult it is to avoid having a special standard for oneself!

C. S. Lewis

Of all bad men religious bad men are the worst.

C. S. Lewis

The most exhausting thing in life is being insincere.

Anne Morrow Lindbergh

We play the game; God keeps the score.

Erwin W. Lutzer

There are over many who have much knowledge and little virtue, and who often speak of God while rarely speaking to him.

Malaval

It is the mark of a hypocrite to be a Christian everywhere except at home.

Robert Murray M'Cheyne

Whitewashing the pump won't make the water pure.

D. L. Moody

There is something of the hypocrites in us all.



Derek Prime

There are many who agree with God in principle but not in practice.

Richard Owen Roberts

The hypocrite will have the lowest place in hell.

J. C. Ryle

Whatever we are in our religion, let us resolve never to wear a cloak. Let us by all means be honest and real.

J. C. Ryle

A painted harlot is less dangerous than a painted hypocrite is.

William Secker

No hypocrite can bear the cross.

Henry Smith

Nothing devalues the truth more quickly than the counterfeit.

R. C. Sproul

Conviction of ignorance is the doorstep to the temple of wisdom.

C. H. Spurgeon

Nothing is more to be despised than a mere painted fire, the simulation of earnestness. Sooner let us have an honest death than a counterfeit life.

C. H. Spurgeon

Of all things in the world that stink in the nostrils of men, hypocrisy is the worst.

C. H. Spurgeon

Religion which is begun in hypocrisy will certainly end in apostasy.

William Spurstowe

How few of us live one life and live it in the open! We are tempted to wear a different mask and play a different role according to each occasion. This is not reality but play-acting, which is the essence of hypocrisy.

John R. W. Stott

Some people weave around them such a tissue of lies that they can no longer tell which part of them is real and which is make-believe.

John R. W. Stott

Ignorance is the mother of superstition, not of devotion.

Augustus H. Strong

Hypocrisy is the loudest lie.

George Swinnock

Ignorance and confidence are often twins.

George Swinnock

To be proud of learning is the greatest ignorance.

Jeremy Taylor

I cannot believe that a man is on the road to heaven when he is habitually performing the kind of deeds that would logically indicate that he ought to be on his way to hell.

A. W. Tozer

When hypocrites ran up against Jesus it was like a cat running into a mowing machine.

A. W. Tozer

We must not think to dine with the devil all day and sup with Christ at night.

John Trapp

The righteous man hath grace beyond expression; the hypocrite hath expression beyond grace.

Ralph Venning

Hypocrites cannot sail in stormy weather.

Thomas Watson

Hypocrites love a cheap religion.

Thomas Watson

The hypocrite hath a squint eye, for he looks more to his own glory than God's.

Thomas Watson

The hypocrite's tongue may be silver, yet his heart stone.

Thomas Watson

The white devil is the worst.

Thomas Watson

Not ignorance, but the ignorance of ignorance, is the death of knowledge.

Alfred North Whitehead

## Matthew 15:9 'BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.'

NET Matthew 15:9 and they worship me in vain, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

NLT Matthew 15:9 Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God.' "

ESV Matthew 15:9 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."

NIV Matthew 15:9 They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."

GNT Matthew 15:9 μ την δ σ βοντα με διδ σκοντες διδασκαλ ας ντ λματα νθρ πων.

KJV Matthew 15:9 But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

- **BUT IN VAIN** : Ex 20:7 Lev 26:16,20 1Sa 25:21 Ps 39:6 Ps 73:13 Ec 5:2-7 Isa 1:13-15 58:1-3 Mal 3:14 Mk 7:7 1Co 15:2 Jas 2:20
- **TEACHING AS DOCTRINES**: De 12:32 Pr 30:5-6 Isa 29:13 Col 2:18-22 1Ti 1:4 1Ti 4:1-3,6,7 Tit 1:14 Heb 13:9 Rev 22:18
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### Related Passages:

Isaiah 29:13 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

Mark 7:7+ 'BUT IN VAIN ([maten](#)) DO THEY WORSHIP ME, TEACHING AS DOCTRINES THE PRECEPTS OF MEN.' (ALL CAPS = quote from OT - Isaiah

Deuteronomy 12:32+ "Whatever I command you, you shall be careful to do;**you shall not add to nor take away from it.**

Proverbs 30:5-6 Every word of God is tested; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. **Do not add to His words** Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar.

Revelation 22:18+ I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book;

1 Timothy 1:4+ nor to pay attention to myths and endless genealogies, which give rise to mere speculation rather than furthering the administration of God which is by faith.

## EMPTY RITUALISTIC HYPOCRITICAL WORSHIP

**BUT IN VAIN DO THEY WORSHIP ME** - NLT minces no words rendering it "Their worship is a farce." Jesus must have really stirred their anger when He declared their worship was senseless, to no end, pointless and without result. Jesus had earlier given an example of **vain worship** declaring "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words." (Mt 6:7+)

**What the Bible Teaches** - The context of Isa 29:13 is important: because of men's activities, God had poured out "the spirit of deep

sleep", having closed their eyes, and having covered the prophets (v. 10). Any vision was to them as a sealed book; in Isa 6:10 the prophet had to blind men, in Matt 13:15 the people blinded their own eyes, in John 12:40 the Lord had blinded their eyes. Thus if there is no reception of divine teaching, then there is a vacuum left to be filled with men's teaching, and then there can be no acceptable worship, for this flows from true hearts filled with true doctrine. The mouth and lips cannot make up for what is lacking in the heart. Thus the strong meat mentioned in Heb 5:14 leads to the sacrifice of praise in 13:15. The water that the Lord would give should lead to worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:14, 24). But time and again God would not accept offerings that He regarded as vain (Isa 1:11). ([What the Bible Teaches Commentary](#))

**Broadus - In vain**, i. e., it is not acceptable to God, nor profitable for themselves. So at the present day many persons claim a divine authority for ideas and practices which are simply of human origin (comp. on v. 2). We are not only under no obligation to conform to these, but it is our duty to oppose them wherever they tend to the violation or neglect of God's commandments. It must also be remembered that our common human nature is very prone to be intent upon the forms of religion and neglect its spirit; to honor God with the lips, while the heart is far from him. ([Matthew 15 Commentary](#))

**TEACHING** ([didasko](#) - present tense = continually) **AS DOCTRINES** ([didaskalia](#)) **THE PRECEPTS** ([entalma](#)) **OF MEN** - Simply stated the Jewish religious leaders had substituted men's teachings (traditions) for God's and were presenting these human precepts in place of the true precepts of God, the only precepts that lead to genuine worship of God..The **NLT** paraphrase has "Their worship is a farce, for they teach man-made ideas as commands from God." What is the problem? The **precepts of men** focus attention in the wrong direction (toward man, away from God), so that worship then becomes empty and worthless, no matter how wonderful it may seem to be externally!

**THOUGHT** - How much church attendance and "Christian" activity preoccupy believers today with things they assume please God yet without ever really ministering materially or spiritually to the desperately needy people of our world? How much of our money is tied up in church buildings or spent only on programs and activities to make ourselves happy rather than caring for the hurting in our midst and across the globe? The more affluent sectors of Western Christianity frequently and frighteningly resemble the religion of the Pharisees as depicted here. God declares all such religion "vain" or futile (v. 9). (Blomberg - NAC)

**Warren Wiersbe** - Tradition is something external, while God's truth is internal, in the heart. People obey tradition to please men and gain status (Gal. 1:14), but we obey the Word to please God. Tradition deals with ritual, while God's truth deals with reality. Tradition brings empty words to the lips, but truth penetrates the heart and changes the life. Actually, tradition robs a person of the power of the Word of God. Unfortunately, there are many "evangelical traditions" in churches today, man-made teachings that are often considered as authoritative as the Word of God—even though they contradict His Word. By obeying these traditions, Christians rob themselves of the power of God's Word. (See [Be Loyal \(Matthew\): Following the King of Kings](#))

**Knox Chamblin** - And we have just considered Jesus' devastating attack upon his contemporaries' practice of allowing human tradition to overrule divine revelation. Lest we relegate that danger to ancient times, let us be aware of our own tendency as Protestants within the Reformed Tradition, to grant to our interpretation of Scripture, an authority that is hardly less than that of Scripture itself. ([Matthew 15:1-20](#))

[Alan Carr](#) says it well - **Genuine Worship Is Always Grounded In God's Truth** - v. 9 - Just because you went to a church and got pumped up by some loud preacher does not mean that you had worship! Just because you did it the same way this week as your forefathers did 200 years ago does not mean you worshiped. You worshiped when you encountered God as He is revealed to us in His Word! You worshiped when your spirit was moved by His Spirit through the proclamation of His truth, John 4:24. You can't even claim to know God until you have come to Him His way! Regardless of what your heart tells you, to think you are saved when you are not is the ultimate in self-deception, Matt. 7:21-23+.

**Broadus** puts it this way "Isaiah means to distinguish between a worship of God that is taught by men, and that which is according to the teaching of God's word." ([Matthew 15 Commentary](#))

You cannot argue, as some do, that truth can be successfully mixed with tradition without compromising the message.  
-- Erwin Lutzer

**MacArthur** writes that "Isaiah's words struck at the heart of the Pharisaic system, which pretended to love God, yet worshiped Him in a way that was superficial, contrived, unbiblical, and unacceptable." (See [Mark Commentary](#))

Creationist **Henry Morris** says "Those professing believers who reject or distort the Scriptures in order to accommodate some humanistic doctrine (evolution, uniformitarianism, abortionism) need to study this strong warning from Christ. In context, He was talking about the extra-Biblical humanistic legalism of the Pharisees, but the principle seems applicable to any displacement of Scripture by some human precept." ([Note](#))

Paul warned about the vanity and uselessness of outward "show" addressing true believers declaring

Colossians 2:20-23+ If (since - assumes this is true) you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in **self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body**, but are of **no value against fleshly indulgence**.

#### Related Resources:

- [How should a Christian view tradition? | GotQuestions.org](#)
- [How much of the Bible was transmitted by oral tradition?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about traditionalism?](#)

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**Vain** (3155) (**maten** from accusative of **mate** = a folly) means groundless, invalid; and in a final sense, purposeless, useless, futile; and according to circumstances it may be both idle and vain. Thayer says it is an "adverb, from Pindar, Aeschylus down, in vain, fruitlessly - Mt. 15:9 and Mk 7:7, after Isa. 29:13 the Septuagint.\* Only 2x in NT - Mt 15:9, Mk 7:7+. **Septuagint** - 1Ki. 21:20; Ps. 35:7; Ps. 39:6; Ps. 39:11; Ps. 41:6; Ps. 63:9; Ps. 127:1 = "Unless the LORD builds the house, They labor in **vain** who build it" (see [Paradoxical Principle of 100% Dependent and 100% Responsible](#)); Ps. 127:2 = "It is **vain** for you to rise up early, To retire late." ; Prov. 3:30; Isa. 27:3; Isa. 28:17; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 30:4; Isa. 41:29; Jer. 2:30; Jer. 4:30; Jer. 8:8; Ezek. 14:23; Dan. 11:24

**Gilbrant** - The adverb *matēn*, according to Bauernfeind, may have one of three meanings: "in vain"; "groundlessly, pointlessly"; or "deceitfully" ("*matēn*," Kittel, 4:523f.). Drawing from Isaiah 29:13, Matthew 15:9 and Mark 7:7 indicate that "hypocrites" worship in vain (*matēn*); it is a futile attempt. Despite their words, worship is pointless for those whose hearts are far from God. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

**Worship** (4576) (**sebomai** from **sébas** = reverential awe <> stem **seb** originally = "to fall back before", sacred, awe) means to hold in high esteem, show reverence or awe (veneration) by someone who his devout. Always in the [middle voice](#) indicating personal involvement in the veneration. **Sebomai** stresses the *outward* (religious) expression of inner piety. Homer uses falling back in the sense of shrinking from. The bodily movement expressed an inner attitude of respect, of being impressed by something great and lofty. The subjects might be gods or men, the objects gods, men or things. The idea of shrinking from the gods leads to the sense of awe or reverence, first in the general form of respect, then in the more specifically religious form of veneration. **Sebomai** then means to live a lifestyle of godliness before others. You may say you worshiped God on Sunday. What was Monday like? Did you give in to the pagan darkness around you or did you express the fact that you are serving a higher King. First, RECOGNITION. Then, the LIFESTYLE. Finally, the WORSHIP. These religious leaders failed in all three categories!

**Teaching** (1321) **didasko** from **dáo**= know or teach; English = didactic; see study of related noun **didaskalia** and the adjective **didaktikos**) means to provide instruction or information in a formal or informal setting. **Didasko** means to teach a student in such a way that the will of the student becomes conformed to the teaching taught. So the teacher teaches in such a way that as the student is taught, he/she now changes his/her mind saying in essence "I won't do it this way, but I will do it this way because I've learned this doctrine or this teaching." Doctrine determines direction of our behavior--conformed to world or to God? (cf Ro 12:1+) Teaching that Scripture finds significant is not that which gives information alone but which produces (Spirit enabled) transformation (2 Cor 3:18+), making disciples (learners) who seek to live supernaturally (enabled by the Spirit - Eph 5:18+) in loving obedience to the will of our Father Who art in Heaven.

**Didasko** in the Gospels - Matt. 4:23; Matt. 5:2; Matt. 5:19; Matt. 7:29; Matt. 9:35; Matt. 11:1; Matt. 13:54; Matt. 15:9; Matt. 21:23; Matt. 22:16; Matt. 26:55; Matt. 28:15; Matt. 28:20; Mk. 1:21; Mk. 1:22; Mk. 2:13; Mk. 4:1; Mk. 4:2; Mk. 6:2; Mk. 6:6; Mk. 6:30; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 7:7; Mk. 8:31; Mk. 9:31; Mk. 10:1; Mk. 11:17; Mk. 12:14; Mk. 12:35; Mk. 14:49; Lk. 4:15; Lk. 4:31; Lk. 5:3; Lk. 5:17; Lk. 6:6; Lk. 11:1; Lk. 12:12; Lk. 13:10; Lk. 13:22; Lk. 13:26; Lk. 19:47; Lk. 20:1; Lk. 20:21; Lk. 21:37; Lk. 23:5; Jn. 6:59; Jn. 7:14; Jn. 7:28; Jn. 7:35; Jn. 8:2; Jn. 8:20; Jn. 8:28; Jn. 9:34; Jn. 14:26; Jn. 18:20;

**Doctrines** (teaching, instruction) (1319) **didaskalia** from **didasko** from **dáo** = to know or teach) is either the act of teaching or the thing taught and in this use denotes doctrine or what is taught. **Doctrine** is from Latin *doctrina* in turn from *doceo* = to teach. The term **doctrine** in Scripture "is broader than a simple reference to information passed on from one person to another or from one generation to the next. Christianity is a religion founded on a message of good news rooted in the significance of the life of Jesus Christ. In Scripture, then, **doctrine** refers to the entire body of essential theological truths that define and describe that message (1Ti 1:10; 4:16; 6:3; Titus 1:9). The message includes historical facts, such as those regarding the events of the life of Jesus Christ (1Cor

11:23). But it is deeper than biographical facts alone. As J. Gresham Machen pointed out years ago, Jesus' death is an integral historical fact but it is not doctrine. Jesus' death for sins (1Cor 15:3) is doctrine. (Sound) **Doctrine**, then, is scriptural teaching on theological truths." (parenthesis added) ([Elwell, W. A., & Elwell, W. A. The Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology](#) - online - an excellent resource)

Didaskalia - 21v - Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Rom. 12:7; Rom. 15:4; Eph. 4:14; Col. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:10; 1 Tim. 4:1; 1 Tim. 4:6; 1 Tim. 4:13; 1 Tim. 4:16; 1 Tim. 5:17; 1 Tim. 6:1; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 3:10; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Tim. 4:3; Tit. 1:9; Tit. 2:1; Tit. 2:7; Tit. 2:10

**Precepts** (1778) **entalma** from **entellomai** = to charge, command) means a command (ment), an order, a write, a decree. what has been ordered commandment, precept, ordinance as officially binding. See also related word entole. 3x in NT - Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Col. 2:22. 4x in the Septuagint - Job 23:11; Job 23:12; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 55:11

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The Pharisees knew a lot about God, but they didn't know God. When we claim to honor God while our heart is far from him, our worship means nothing. It is not enough to study about religion or even to study the Bible; it is not enough to act religious. Our actions and our attitudes must be sincere. If they are not, Isaiah's words also describe us.

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**Vance Havner** - In vain do they worship me.... Matthew 15:9.

Idol worship in Africa is no worse than idle worship in America.

All is vain unless the Spirit Of the Holy One comes down. GEORGE ATKINS

God was disgusted with idle worship in Israel. Amos ridiculed it in Bethel. Our Lord was nauseated with the lukewarmness of Laodicea. Sunday-morning Christianity is the greatest hindrance to true revival. Experience has become mere performance, "a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof..." (2 Timothy 3:5).

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**J C Ryle** - WE have in these verses a conversation between our Lord Jesus Christ, and certain Scribes and Pharisees. The subject of it may seem, at first sight, of little interest in modern days. But it is not so in reality. The principles of the Pharisees are principles that never die. There are truths laid down here, which are of deep importance.

We learn, for one thing, that hypocrites generally attach great importance to mere outward things in religion.

The complaint of the Scribes and Pharisees in this place, is a striking case in point. They brought an accusation to our Lord against His disciples. But what was its nature? It was not that they were covetous or self-righteous. It was not that they were untruthful or uncharitable. It was not that they had broken any part of the law of God. But they "transgressed the traditions of the elders.—They did not wash their hands when they ate bread." They did not observe some rule of mere human authority, which some old Jew had invented! This was the head and front of their offence!

Do we see nothing of the spirit of the Pharisees in the present day? Unhappily we see only too much. There are thousands of professing Christians, who seem to care nothing about the religion of their neighbors, provided that it agrees in outward matters with their own. Does their neighbor worship according to their particular form? Can he repeat their shibboleth, and talk a little about their favorite doctrines? If he can, they are satisfied, though there is no evidence that he is converted. If he cannot, they are always finding fault, and cannot speak peaceably of him, though he may be serving Christ better than themselves. Let us beware of this spirit. It is the very essence of hypocrisy. Let our principle be: "the kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. 14:17.)

We learn, for another thing, from these verses, the great danger of attempting to add anything to the word of God. Whenever a man takes upon him to make additions to the Scriptures, he is likely to end with valuing his own additions above Scripture itself.

We see this point brought out most strikingly in our Lord's answer to the charge of the Pharisees against His disciples. He says, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions?" He strikes boldly at the whole system of adding anything, as needful to salvation, to God's perfect word. He exposes the mischievous tendency of the system by an example. He shows how the vaunted traditions of the Pharisees were actually destroying the authority of the fifth commandment. In short, He establishes the great truth, which ought never be forgotten, that there is an inherent tendency in all traditions, to "make the word of God of none effect." The authors of these traditions may have meant no such thing. Their intentions may have been pure. But that there is a tendency in all religious institutions of mere human authority, to usurp the authority of God's

word, is evidently the doctrine of Christ. It is a solemn remark of Bucer's, that "a man is rarely to be found, who pays an excessive attention to human inventions in religion, who does not put more trust in them than in the grace of God."

And have we not seen melancholy proof of this truth, in the history of the Church of Christ? Unhappily we have seen only too much. As Baxter says, "men think God's laws too many and too strict, and yet make more of their own, and are precise for keeping them." Have we never read how some have exalted canons, rubrics, and ecclesiastical laws above the word of God, and punished disobedience to them with far greater severity than open sins, like drunkenness and swearing?—Have we never heard of the extravagant importance which the Church of Rome attaches to monastic vows, and vows of celibacy, and keeping feasts and fasts; insomuch that she seems to place them far above family duties, and the ten commandments?—Have we never heard of men who make more ado about eating flesh in Lent, than about gross impurity of life, or murder?—Have we never observed in our own land, how many seem to make adherence to Episcopacy the weightiest matter in Christianity, and to regard "Churchmanship," as they call it, as far outweighing repentance, faith, holiness, and the graces of the Spirit?—These are questions which can only receive one sorrowful answer. The spirit of the Pharisees still lives, after eighteen hundred years. The disposition to "make the word of God of none effect by traditions," is to be found among Christians, as well as among Jews. The tendency practically to exalt man's inventions above God's word, is still fearfully prevalent. May we watch against it, and be on our guard! May we remember that no tradition or man-made institution in religion can ever excuse the neglect of relative duties, or justify disobedience to any plain commandment of God's word.

We learn, in the last place, from these verses, that the religious worship which God desires, is the worship of the heart. We find our Lord establishing this by a quotation from Isaiah, "This people draweth near to me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

The heart is the principal thing in the relation of husband and wife, of friend and friend, of parent and child. The heart must be the principal point to which we attend in all the relations between God and our souls. What is the first thing we need, in order to be Christians? A new heart.—What is the sacrifice God asks us to bring to him? A broken and a contrite heart.—What is the true circumcision? The circumcision of the heart.—What is genuine obedience? To obey from the heart.—What is saving faith? To believe with the heart.—Where ought Christ to dwell? To dwell in our hearts by faith.—What is the chief request that Wisdom makes to every one? "My son, give me thine heart."

**APPLICATION - Let us leave the passage with honest self-inquiry as to the state of our own hearts. Let us settle it in our minds, that all formal worship of God, whether in public or private, is utterly in vain, so long as our "hearts are far from Him." The bended knee, the bowed head, the loud amen, the daily chapter, the regular attendance at the Lord's table, are all useless and unprofitable, so long as our affections are nailed to sin, or pleasure, or money, or the world. The question of our Lord must yet be answered satisfactorily, before we can be saved. He says to every one, "lovest thou me?" (John 21:17.)**

**Matthew 15:10 After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, 'Hear and understand.'**

NET Matthew 15:10 Then he called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand.

NLT Matthew 15:10 Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. "Listen," he said, "and try to understand.

ESV Matthew 15:10 And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand:

NIV Matthew 15:10 Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand.

GNT Matthew 15:10 Κα προσκαλεσ μενος τ ν χλον ε πεν α το ς, κο ετε κα συν ετε·

KJV Matthew 15:10 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

- **He:** 1Ki 22:28 Mk 7:14,16 Lu 20:45-47
- **Hear:** Mt 13:19 24:15 Isa 6:9 55:3 Lu 24:45 Eph 1:17 Col 1:9 Jas 1:5
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**CHRIST CORRALS**  
**THE CROWD**

## Related Passage:

Mark 7:14+ After He called the crowd to Him again, He began saying to them, '**Listen** to Me, all of you, and **understand**:'

**After Jesus called** ([proskaleo](#) - summoned to himself) **the crowd to Him, He said to them**- Who is **the crowd**? Probably the group described in Mt 14:34–36 who had come to Jesus for healing. Why did He have to call the crowd to Him? Neither Matthew or Mark explain exactly why, but it is possible the crowd drew back when they saw the respected scribes and Pharisees engaging Jesus in conversation. Did the crowd hear their conversation? I am not sure. The important point is that Jesus wants them to understand what He has told the religious leaders about unbiblical traditions and vain worship.

**Spurgeon** - If a man fails to **understand** more deep and mysterious truths, yet let him **understand** this, for an error here is an error upon a vital point, and may lead to most serious damage, if not to eternal ruin. **We are all of us called upon therefore to hear and to understand this day** what the Savior says in the words of the text. Let me read them again, that they may sink into your minds.

**Wuest** - Our Lord now takes the people into the discussion. He uncovers the hypocrisy of the Pharisees so that the people can see the true character of their religious leaders. The question at issue was concerning ceremonial defilement incurred by disobedience to the man-made regulations of the Pharisees. Jesus proceeds to show the fallacy of these regulations.

**Hear and understand** - Both are in the [present imperative](#) (which is interesting as the parallel commands in Mark 7:14+ are in the [aorist imperative](#)) - continually hear and continually understand which was a common idiom that meant, '**Listen carefully and pay close attention**,' and it often preceded a message of great importance. What Jesus was getting ready to say was of great importance! It was not that what Jesus said would be hard to *understand* but that it would be hard to *accept*. The greatest stumbling block to salvation has always been lack of acceptance and belief of the Gospel, not lack of understanding. It is when the Gospel is presented most clearly that it is likely to be the most unacceptable! Most of us have had this experience. We engage another person talking about prayer or God, etc, but then we must come to the most important question "Who is Jesus Christ and why did He die on the Cross?" That is when I have experienced their resistance to accept the Gospel now that they fully grasp what the Gospel means and that it calls for them to make a personal decision by grace through faith. As usual, Jesus' following illustration is simple and based on the common knowledge and everyday experiences of the people.

John Broadus - It was something important, and demanded attentive consideration. The disciples presently called it a **parable**' (Mt 15:15), yet he was not now employing obscure expressions as a judgment (Mt 13:13), but with great desire that all (Mark 7:14) should understand. And they must not merely hear, but understand; for he will not recite decisions and opinions of the ancients, as the Scribes did, but will speak by his own authority (7:29), directly to the understanding and conscience of the people

Note that even the disciples failed to **hear and understand** as we can see from their question in Matthew 15:15 and Jesus' response to them in Matthew 15:16.

**Understand** (4920) ([suniemi](#) from [sun/syn](#) = with + [hiemi](#) = send; cf [sunesis](#)) literally means to send together or bring together. The idea is to put together "pieces of the puzzle" (so to speak) and to exhibit comprehension. **Suniemi** describes the ability to understand concepts and see relationships between the various concepts and see relationships between them. In short, this verb describes the exercise of the faculty of comprehension, intelligence, acuteness, shrewdness. The noun **sunesis** was originally used by Homer in the Odyssey to describe the running together or a flowing together of two rivers. Used 25x mostly in the Gospels - Mt. 13:13; Mt. 13:14; Mt. 13:15; Mt. 13:19; Mt. 13:23; Mt. 13:51; Mt. 15:10; Mt. 16:12; Mt. 17:13; Mk. 4:12; Mk. 6:52; Mk. 7:14; Mk. 8:17; Mk. 8:21; Lk. 2:50; Lk. 8:10; Lk. 18:34; Lk. 24:45; Acts 7:25; Acts 28:26; Acts 28:27; Ro. 3:11; Ro. 15:21; 2 Co. 10:12; Eph. 5:17

**Matthew 15:11 "It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man."**

NET Matthew 15:11 What defiles a person is not what goes into the mouth; it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles a person."

NLT Matthew 15:11 It's not what goes into your mouth that defiles you; you are defiled by the words that come out of your mouth."

ESV Matthew 15:11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person."

NIV Matthew 15:11 What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.' "

GNT Matthew 15:11 ο τ ε σερχ μενον ε ς τ στ μα κοινο τ ν νθρωπον, λλ τ κπορευ μενον κ το στ ματος το το κοινο τ ν νθρωπον.

KJV Matthew 15:11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

- **It is not what enters into the mouth** Mk 7:15 Lu 11:38-41 Ac 10:14,15 11:8,9 Ro 14:14,17,20 1Ti 4:4,5 Tit 1:15 Heb 13:9
- **but what proceeds out of the mouth:** Mt 15:18-20 12:34-37 Ps 10:7 12:2 52:2-4 58:3,4 Isa 37:23 Isa 59:3-5,13-15 Jer 9:3-6 Ro 3:13,14 Jas 3:5-8 2Pe 2:18
- **[Matthew 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Acts 10:15+ Again a voice came to him a second time, "What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy."

Matthew 15:17+ "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?"

1 Corinthians 6:13+ Food is for the stomach and the stomach is for food, but God will do away with both of them. Yet the body is not for immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body.

Colossians 2:20-23+ If (SINCE) you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourself to decrees, such as, 21 "Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!" 22 (which all refer to things destined to perish with use)—in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? 23 These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and severe treatment of the body, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence. (SO WHAT IS OF VALUE AGAINST FLESHLY INDULGENCE? Read Col 3:1-4+ and then Col 3:5+ which speaks of fleshly indulgence!)

KOSHER FOR PASSOVER

### THE PROBLEM IS NOT EXTERNAL THE PROBLEM IS INTERNAL

**It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles ([koinoo](#)) the man** - Jesus is speaking of spiritual defilement in the context of the subject in the preceding context, which had to do with foods (eating with ceremonial washing). This is radical teaching to these Jews who had been taught by the Pharisees that they must observe external rituals (in this context related to eating) in order to attain ceremonial purity. Note that the **key word** in this section is **defile** (4x in Mark's account and 5x in Matthew's account - Mt 15:11 = twice, Mt 15:18, Mt 15:30 = twice). To defile something means to undermine its purity, to contaminate it or make it unclean. Defilement is the violation of something considered sacred (e.g., believer's body - 1Co 6:19-20+).

It is not a question of hand washing,  
but of "heart washing!"

**Louis Barbieri** - The Pharisees were wrong in thinking their washings kept them spiritually clean. (BKC)

**Guzik** - This is not to say that there are not defiling things that we can take into ourselves; one example of this might be pornography. But in this specific context, Jesus spoke about ceremonial cleanliness in regard to food, and He anticipated that under the New Covenant all food would be declared kosher (Acts 10:15+).

**Lenski** - When Jesus says that nothing that is outside of a man can, by entering into him, defile him (see Mark 7:15) he refers to eating with unwashed hands. The Pharisees claimed that such hands defiled the food they touched and thus defiled the man who ate that food. Jesus says that the principle is wrong on which this specific case is based; in fact, it turns the entire principle upside down. For not what enters into but what comes out of the mouth defiles the man. Defilement is not physical but moral and spiritual. It never comes into the mouth but is in the heart, so that the mouth lets it come out.

**Wuest** - When our Lord spoke of that which enters a man, He was speaking of food. That does not make a man **ceremonially unclean**, (does not defile - [koinoo](#)) even though he eat it with **ceremonially unwashed hands**. When He spoke of that which comes out of a man which defiles him, He was referring to the extra-biblical teachings of the Pharisees which defiled them in the



sense that these teachers were, by their teachings which were in direct opposition to God's Word, constituted false teachers, thus, not hallowed or set apart for God.

**Akin** - The fruit of sin has its root in every human heart! Every human heart has the root of every human sin in it! You see, it is entirely possible to look nice on the outside while being dead on the inside. The most deadly contamination is not what I touch. The most deadly contamination is what I think! Proverbs 23:7: "As a man thinks in his heart so is he!"

**What the Bible Teaches** - The Lord distinguished between two things: that which enters the mouth physically and that which leaves the mouth morally. The point is that food partaken without the observation of the Pharisees' ceremonial ritual of washing never harmed or poisoned a man (the Lord was not speaking of proper hygienic observations nor of such things as poisons). Under the law, some food was ceremonially unclean, but in Christ even this could not defile a man, since every creature is "good, and nothing to be refused" (1 Tim 4:3-5). Peter had to learn that lesson in Acts 10:11-16, "I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean ... What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common". By contrast, the Lord said, what emerges from the mouth reveals the state of the inner-self, and talk leads to practice, thereby defiling the man. But the Pharisees' tradition conveniently overlooked these weightier matters of the law.

**MacArthur** - Spiritual defilement is a matter of the inside, not the outside. No spiritual or moral contamination can result from what we eat. The physical has no way of defiling the spiritual. "Don't be deceived and misled by the foolish traditions you have been taught," Jesus was saying. "The practice of washing your hands before you eat has nothing to do with making you undented. What matters is what is in your heart.

**John Phillips** - In one sweeping statement He had denounced the entire structure by which the rabbinical schools, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the religious leaders secured their hold on the multitudes. He labeled their religious rules and regulations, their exegesis, and their spirit-stifling, God-dishonoring, Bible-contradicting, man-enslaving, soul-destroying, ego-building, Satan-serving traditions as worthless

But **Term of contrast**. What is the straightforward contrast? Contrast the external versus the internal.

**What proceeds out (ekporeuomai) of the mouth** - Jesus states that defilement is an internal problem. Defilement is not an external problem as the Pharisees had taught the multitudes, but was an internal problem. Yes, it is what one says, but is also what one thinks and what one does (as we can see in the list of sins in the following section).

**William Barclay** wrote "Although it may not seem so now, this passage, when it was first spoken, was well-nigh the most revolutionary passage in the New Testament."

**MacArthur** - No Jew should have been shocked at what Jesus was saying. Just as in the Sermon on the Mount, He was not teaching new truths but was simply reinforcing truths that God's Word had always taught. Even the most unlearned among the crowd had doubtlessly heard the story of the Lord's choosing David to be Israel's king in place of Saul. When Jesse brought his sons before Samuel, the prophet thought that Eliab, the eldest, was "surely the Lord's anointed.' ... But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not look at his appearance or at the height of his stature, because I have rejected him; for God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart'" (1Sa16:6-7). A person's defiled heart is expressed both in what he says and in what he does; but the mouth is the more dominant revealer of internal pollution, because it is through our words that hatred, deception, cruelty, blasphemy, and most other evils are most clearly manifest.

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**Defiles (2840)(koinoo** from **koinos** = common, defiled, unclean, unholy, profane, that which lies common or open to all) means to make koinos or common. In Scripture, **koinoo** means to make unclean, to profane (treat something with irreverence or contempt), to desecrate (to treat disrespectfully, irreverentially, outrageously), to render unhallowed, to pollute, to make or cause to become ritually unacceptable. The idea of **koinoo** is a violation of ritual holiness. **Koinoo** - Classic Greek - to make one a participant in something, to have a share in, to unite. All NT uses.- Matt. 15:11; Matt. 15:18; Matt. 15:20; Mk. 7:15; Mk. 7:18; Mk. 7:20; Mk. 7:23; Acts 10:15; Acts 11:9; Acts 21:28; Heb. 9:13

**Proceeds out (1607)(ekporeuomai** from **ek** = out + **poreuomai** = come, go) to make to go forth, to go forth. Friberg - (1) literally; (a) absolutely go from or out of a place, depart from (Mk 6.11); go out (Acts 9.28); (b) of the dead coming out of tombs emerge, come forth (Jn 5.29); (c) of demons come out ( Mt 17.21); (d) of a journey set out (Mk 10.17); (2) figuratively; (a) of words or thoughts proceed from, go or come out of the mouth, i.e. be spoken (Mt 15.11); (b) of a report spread abroad, tell everywhere (Lk 4.37); (c) of the Spirit proceed from (Jn 15.26); (d) of water flow out, stream forth (Rev 22.1) **BDAG** - 1. to be in motion from one area to another, 2. to come forth from, come/go out, proceed, in imagery, of things, words, or thoughts Mt 15:11, Lk 4:22; Eph 4:29. What comes out of a pers. Mk 7:15, 20, 21, 23. Mt 4:4 (Dt 8:3 ). Of truth ev. Hm 3:1. Of fire, lightning, etc. (Job 41:12): lightning (Ezek 1:13) Rev 4:5; fire Rev 9:17,18; 11:5; fiery locusts Hv 4, 1, 6. Of streams of water flow out (Ezek 47:1, 8 , 12) Rev 22:1 Of a sword project Rev 1:16; 19:15; reports about him spread into every place Lk 4:37

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Cleanness and Uncleanness under the Old Covenant. The laws concerning unclean animals, Lev 11; served a twofold purpose.

Reminders of redemption. The distinction between "clean" and "unclean" animals, served constantly to remind Israel that God had distinguished her from other peoples and set her apart to be his "holy people." Cf. Ex 19:5; Deut 7:6; and G. J. Wenham, Leviticus, 165-71, 180-84. Such reminders called for another kind.

Reminders of morality. These ceremonial laws, like the others, were based upon and expressive of God's moral law; they were "symbols of a moral order" and "reminders ... of moral values" (Wenham, 184). "Only the normal members of each sphere of creation, e.g., fishes with fins, counted as clean. This definition, which identified 'perfect' members of the animal kingdom with purity, was a reminder that God looked for moral perfection in his people. Carrion-eating birds and carnivorous animals were unclean because they also typified a man's sinful, destructive, and murderous instincts" (ibid.). (Knox Chamblin)

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From the Choice Gleanings Calendar comes this story: On one occasion Hudson Taylor wanted to teach a spiritual lesson, so he filled a glass with water and placed it on the table before him. While he was speaking, he pounded his fist hard enough to make the water splash onto the table. He then explained, "You will come up against much trouble. But when you do, remember only what's in you will spill out." - Our Daily Bread

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**QUESTION** - [What does the Bible say about what foods we should eat \(kosher\)? Are there foods a Christian should avoid? WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

**ANSWER** - Leviticus chapter 11 lists the dietary restrictions God gave to the nation of Israel. The dietary laws included prohibitions against eating pork, shrimp, shellfish and many types of seafood, most insects, scavenger birds, and various other animals. The dietary rules were never intended to apply to anyone other than the Israelites. The purpose of the food laws was to make the Israelites distinct from all other nations. After this purpose had ended, Jesus declared all foods clean (Mark 7:19+). Later, God gave the apostle Peter a vision that implied formerly unclean animals could be eaten: "Do not call anything impure that God has made clean" (Acts 10:15+). When Jesus died on the cross, He fulfilled the Old Testament law (Romans 10:4+; Galatians 3:24-26+; Ephesians 2:15+). This includes the laws regarding clean and unclean foods.

Romans 14:1-23+ teaches us that not everyone is mature enough in the faith to accept the fact that all foods are clean. As a result, if we are with someone who would be offended by our eating "unclean" food, we should give up our right to do so as to not offend the other person. We have the right to eat whatever we want, but we do not have the right to offend other people, even if they are wrong. For the Christian in this age, though, we have freedom to eat whatever we wish as long as it does not cause someone else to stumble in his/her faith.

In the New Covenant of grace, the Bible is far more concerned with how much we eat than what foods Christians eat. Physical appetites are an analogy of our ability to control ourselves. If we are unable to control our eating habits, we are probably also unable to control other habits such as those of the mind (lust, covetousness, unrighteous hatred/anger) and unable to keep our mouths from gossip or strife. As Christians, we are not to let our appetites control us; rather, we are to control them (Deuteronomy 21:20; Proverbs 23:2; 2 Peter 1:5-7; 2 Timothy 3:1-9; 2 Corinthians 10:5). [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org)

#### **Related Resources from Gotquestions.org**

- [Why did the Old Testament Law command against the eating of pork?](#)
- [What does it mean to give glory to God whether you eat or drink \(1 Corinthians 10:31\)?](#)

**Matthew 15:12 Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?"**

NET Matthew 15:12 Then the disciples came to him and said, "Do you know that when the Pharisees heard this saying they were offended?"

NLT Matthew 15:12 Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you realize you offended the Pharisees by what you just said?"

ESV Matthew 15:12 Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"

NIV Matthew 15:12 Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

GNT Matthew 15:12 Τ τε προσελθ ντες ο μαθητα λ γουσιν α τ , Ο δας τι ο Φαρισα οι κο σαντες τ ν λ γον σκανδαλ σθησαν;

KJV Matthew 15:12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

- **Do You know that the Pharisees:** Mt 17:27 1Ki 22:13,14 1Co 10:32,33 2Co 6:3 Ga 2:5 Jas 3:17
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PHARISEES WERE SCANDALIZED

**Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement- What statement?** Clearly the revolutionary revelation of Mt 15:11! At least Jesus was able to illicit some reaction from them, even it was negative. He was not trying to comfort them to convict them that by the truth they might see the error of their ways. But the truth only seemed to hardened them even more to His teaching. These men were hypocrites and the truth of God's Word in effect tore off their "masks" so that one could see what they really were like. John 3 alludes to the effect of light quoting the words of Jesus "This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil. For everyone who does evil **hates the Light**, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds will be exposed." (John 3:19-20+)

**Guzik** - This is a humorous scene. The disciples came to Jesus, saying something like this: "Jesus—did you know that you offended those guys?" Of course Jesus knew that He offended them! He intended to offend them and the way they valued man's tradition too highly.

**Knox Chamblin** - A parable might "offend" a member of the crowd because its meaning stays hidden; the parable of v. 12 "offends" (or more literally "scandalizes") the Pharisees precisely because its meaning (together with the implications for their view of the Law) is all too clear. Cf. comments on 12:30-37. Such is the hardness of the Pharisees' opposition, and such is their blasphemy, that they stand under irreversible judgment (v. 13; the "plants to be uprooted" are the Pharisees themselves; apud Carson, 350).

**John Broadus** - This (vv 12-14) is found in Matthew only. It appears that the conversation occurred after Jesus and his immediate followers had retired from the crowd into a house. (Mark 7:17.) There had thus been a little interval since the saying of v. 11 was uttered, and the disciples had heard how the Pharisees were talking about it. They felt that the opinions of these distinguished men from Jerusalem (v. 1) were very important.

**What the Bible Teaches** - Neither the Pharisees nor the multitude were allowed to hear the explanation of the parable, in keeping with the new principles introduced by the Lord previously in Matt 13:11. So this explanation took place in "the house from the people" (Mark 7:17). The Lord deliberately left them outside in ignorance. By saying that "the Pharisees were offended", it appears that the disciples were gently rebuking the Lord, because they failed to understand the new principles under which He was directing His ministry. We must, of course, ensure that our lives and conduct do not offend unbelievers (Matt 17:27), but the truth even in parabolic form will offend or stumble if it is rejected.

**Offended** (4624)([skandalizo](#) from [skandalon](#)= a trap = put a snare or stumbling block in way; English = scandalize = to offend the moral sense of) means to put a snare (in the way), hence to cause to stumble, to give offense. In the present case the meaning of the disciples seems to be "made to stumble, finding an obstacle to their believing reception of Jesus' teachings." (Broadus)

**Matthew 15:13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted.**

NET Matthew 15:13 And he replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father did not plant will be uprooted.

NLT Matthew 15:13 Jesus replied, "Every plant not planted by my heavenly Father will be uprooted,

ESV Matthew 15:13 He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up.

NIV Matthew 15:13 He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots.

GNT Matthew 15:13 δ ποκριθε ς ε πεν, Π σα φυτε α ν ο κ φ τευσειν πατ ρ μου ο ρ νιος κριζωθ σεται.

KJV Matthew 15:13 But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

- **Every:** Mt 13:40,41 Ps 92:13 Isa 60:21 Joh 15:2,6 1Co 3:12-15
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Matthew 15:12-14 is not found in the parallel passages in Mark 7 but are unique to Matthew's account.

**But He answered** - "Our Lord's reply is to the effect that it matters not what such men think, whose authority is merely human, and who are as blind as the multitude they lead." (Broadus)

**and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted"**- What God plants will remain. What He does not plant will be destroyed. MacArthur says "those plants are the ungodly tares, which God now allows to grow alongside the godly wheat. But at the end of the age, the tares will be "gathered up and burned with fire" as God's angels "will gather out of His kingdom all stumbling blocks, and those who commit lawlessness, and will cast them into the furnace of fire" (Matt. 13:40–42)" As Utley says "Peace at any price was not Jesus' way!"

**Guzik** - This applied directly to the religious leaders and all like them. Their commandments of men will not last, because they are not rooted either in God or truth.

**Spurgeon** points out that "There was no need for the disciples to combat the Pharisees, they would be uprooted in the natural order of things by the inevitable consequences of their own course."

In Paul's letter to the Corinthians he wrote "I planted, Apollos watered, but **God was causing the growth.**" We see the same thought in Isaiah, "'Then all your people will be righteous; They will possess the land forever, **The branch of My planting,** The work of My hands, That I may be glorified." (Isaiah 60:21) And again in Isaiah 61:3 we read "To grant those who mourn in Zion, Giving them a garland instead of ashes, The oil of gladness instead of mourning, The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting. So they will be called oaks of righteousness, **The planting of the LORD,** that He may be glorified."

**What the Bible Teaches** - Otherwise plants and trees, not being the planting of the Lord shall be rooted up; John the Baptist had used the metaphor of trees being hewn down and cast into the fire (Matt 3:10). The very last public pronouncement the Lord made before He was crucified was of a similar nature, "if they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31). But in Matt 15, the Lord was more particularly referring to the Pharisees; the plant's fruit was the pharisaical doctrines so contrary to the Lord's teaching.

**THOUGHT** - "Here, then, we find the test of all human teaching however well-intentioned. If it be not based upon and rooted in the Word of God, or if it depart in any degree from the true intention of that Word, it is without pity to be rooted up. By this test we need ever to try our traditions, customs, habits, rules, regulations."  
(G Campbell Morgan)

As an aside, it is notable that this passage clearly implies "election" of some "plants" but remember that God's choosing some to be of the elect does not mean He rejects those not chosen. On the other side of this inscrutable coin, is the truth of man's free will and try as we might we cannot resolve the truth behind both election and free will (especially as we know that no man left to his own heart's desires would chose for God). What we should do is fall on our face in adoration and awe that He would chose ANYONE! We need to gird up our minds as God instructs Job (Job 38:3, 40:7) and accept with gratitude that the Creator would even chose to reveal **any** of this incredible truth to us. We surely have a far too truncated concept of Perfection, Omniscience, Omnipotence, etc. O come let us adore Him. Amen.

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### **John Bennett - EVERY PLANT, WHICH MY HEAVENLY FATHER HATH NOT PLANTED, SHALL BE ROOTED UP**

The first twenty verses of Matthew chapter 15 sum up the great controversy of the New Testament—between the law and the gospel. Jerusalem scribes and Pharisees had travelled sixty miles north to Galilee to oppose Christ. They accused His disciples of eating with unwashed hands, v. 2. Their dogma prescribed ritual washings, not for reasons of hygiene, but of holiness. They preached separatism, regarding much of mankind as 'unclean'.

The Lord strongly condemned their hypocrisy in observing the letter of the law, while denying its spirit, vv. 3–9. Then, He tells the multitude about true and spurious defilement, using a parable of the human body, vv. 10–11. This He interprets privately to His disciples, Mark 7:17–23. Ceremonial washing and dietary restrictions do not affect moral purity. Wicked hearts will still spawn evil thoughts, words, and deeds. Christianity promises and begets a clean heart—"truth in the inward parts".

The disciples were concerned that this teaching would offend the Pharisees. Christ responds by telling two more short parables, showing the futility of basing religion on the tradition of the elders, rather than 'the commandment of God', v. 3.

'Every plant'—this is not a wild, but a cultivated plant or tree. The word occurs only here, and in the LXX, 2 Kgs. 19:29; Ezek. 17:7; Mic. 1:6, where it refers to the vine, the most highly cultivated of all plants, and the trees planted by Abraham pledging Israel's future possession of Palestine, Gen. 21:33. The Father, the divine Husbandman, has planted one 'true vine', His beloved Son. He will uproot every rival plant cultivated by human hands including, of course, that of the Pharisees.

In the second parable, He likens them to 'blind leaders of the blind'. They had been judicially blinded by God because of their wilful unbelief. In Israel, many souls were afflicted with blindness, and hazardous pits and ditches abounded. It was dangerous for the blind to walk about without help or guidance. How much more perilous if that person were leading others! The Lord warns His disciples, v. 14, 'Let them alone'—don't join or follow them, or you too will fall into the ditch!

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### **Needed: A Big Thaw**

You are the salt of the earth . . . . You are the light of the world. —Matthew 5:13-14

Today's Scripture: Matthew 5:13-20

Several years ago, a fire destroyed a building that contained tons of ice. Author Carl Franke said that although the building had contained thousands of gallons of potential extinguisher, the water was not in usable form. The building was full of frozen assets!

Unfortunately, many individuals and churches have a similar problem. In spite of being blessed with tons of resources for witness and service, God's chosen people are often God's "frozen people."

Jesus said that we are salt and light, but He warned against losing our saltiness and hiding our light (Mt. 5:13-20). Here are two safeguards to prevent this from happening:

1. Salt as a seasoning is useless unless it's in contact with food and mixed into it. Jesus calls us to "flavor" society in His name through close involvement with people.
2. Light is meant to be visible. Secret believers need to come out of hiding and be known as disciples. Their profession of faith must become self-evident through their good works. D. L. Moody said, "Lighthouses don't fire cannons to call attention to their shining. They just shine."

We are to season society and light up our world for Christ. It's time to thaw out the frozen assets in our lives. By: Joanie Yoder [Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, help us be a shining light  
So others then may see  
Your mercy and Your love displayed  
In what we strive to be.  
—Sper

Our purpose on earth is not to get used to the dark, but to shine as lights.

**Matthew 15:14 "Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."**

BGT Matthew 15:14 φετε α το ς τυφλο ε σιν δ ηγο [τυφλ ν] τυφλ ς δ τυφλ ν ν δ ηγ , μφ τεροι ε ς β θυνον πεσο νται.

NET Matthew 15:14 Leave them! They are blind guides. If someone who is blind leads another who is blind, both will fall into a pit."

NLT Matthew 15:14 so ignore them. They are blind guides leading the blind, and if one blind person guides another, they will both fall into a ditch."

ESV Matthew 15:14 Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit."

NIV Matthew 15:14 Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

GNT Matthew 15:14 φετε α το ς· τυφλο ε σιν δ̄ηγο [τυφλ ν]· τυφλ ς δ̄ τυφλ ν ν δ̄ηγ , μφ τεροι ε ς β̄θουνον πεσο νται.

KJV Matthew 15:14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

- **Let:** Ho 4:17 1Ti 6:5
- **they:** Mt 23:16-24 Isa 9:16 42:19 56:10 Mal 2:8 Lu 6:39
- **And if:** Jer 5:31 6:15 8:12 Eze 14:9,10 Mic 3:6,7 2Pe 2:1,17 Rev 19:20 Rev 22:15
- **[Matthew 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Let them alone** - Broadus paraphrases it "**do not trouble yourselves about them**, as to what they teach, or whether they approve my teaching. The Great Teacher did not expect, and did not try, to please all his hearers. Such as were blinded by prejudice, hardened in unbelief, or willful in their opposition, could only be let alone."

**Guzik** - Jesus did not organize a focused "Anti-Scribe and Pharisee" committee. He knew that their efforts would fail under the weight of its own legalism. In these words of Jesus, we see the guilt of those who are blind leaders of the blind. We also see the responsibility of followers to make sure their leaders are not blind.

**MacArthur** - "Keep away from them and have nothing to do with them. It is spiritually dangerous to stay around apostates and others who steadfastly reject and oppose the gospel of Christ. If there is opportunity to witness to them, it should be done with the greatest of caution, "snatching them out of the fire," as it were, and being careful not to get burned ourselves in the process (Jude 23). We should not even listen to "the opposing arguments of what is falsely called knowledge" (1 Tim. 6:20). Exposing ourselves to such people and such teaching risks spiritual disaster (cf. 2 John 8–11)."

**They are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit-** This picture does not need a lot of explaining as it is clear what it means. False teachers like the Pharisees (of their father the devil Jn 8:44) were themselves spiritually blind and deceived and their teaching would deceive others and lead them astray from the truth. Paul alludes to this in 2 Ti 3:13 writing that " evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, **deceiving** and **being deceived**."

**D A Carson** - "Though the Pharisees and teachers of the law had scrolls and interpreted them in the synagogues, this does not mean that they really understood them ... The Pharisees did not follow Jesus; so they did not understand and follow the Scriptures."

**Matthew Poole** - "I pity the poor people, for whilst the blind lead the blind they both fall into a ditch. An ignorant and unfaithful ministry is the greatest plague God can send amongst a people."

**MacArthur** - The **pit** physically referred to holes that were dug in a field or pasture and filled with water for use as drinking troughs for animals. A blind man walking through a field would eventually fall into a pit. But the spiritual meaning of pit is hell. The blind guides are the Pharisees themselves, and the other blind are their converts, who become twice the sons of hell as their teachers (Matt. 23:15).

**A.T. Robertson** writes: "Graphic picture. Once in Cincinnati a blind man introduced me to his blind friend. He said that he was showing him the city. Jesus is not afraid of the Pharisees. Let them alone to do their worst. Blind leaders and blind victims will land in the ditch. A proverbial expression in the O.T."

**Alan Carr**- These Pharisees believed in their hearts that they knew the Lord. However, Jesus lets us in on the real truth of the matter! They were not saved, they were merely blind leaders of the blind and they were all headed to judgment and to destruction, v. 13-14. They had been deceived by that Master of Deception: the human heart!

**What the Bible Teaches** - Thus during the last part of the wilderness journey up the east side of the Dead Sea, the children of Israel were not to "meddle" with the inhabitants of mount Seir (Deut 2:5), nor with the Moabites (Dt 2:9), nor with the Ammonites (Dt 2:19). We are not called upon to reform any heretical or formal religion. Believers possess gifts for preaching the gospel so that converts should come out of such religious environments. Blind leaders lead blind congregations, such leaders adhering dogmatically to error, for these blind leaders are those from whom the Lord took away the last shred of truth. Such men have placed themselves outside the kingdom of God, and their judgment lingereth for a while.

Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ. — 1 Corinthians 11:1

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:1-20

I was having coffee at McDonald's when I noticed a man walk in who was holding a white cane. He had his hand on a young boy's shoulder and appeared to have complete trust in his ability to guide him.

Jesus spoke about leaders who couldn't be trusted. He called the religious leaders of His day "hypocrites" and "blind leaders of the blind" (Mt. 15:7-14). The scribes and Pharisees were teaching man-made traditions, not God's commands (vv.3-9).

Today many voices are crying out from radio, TV, and the pulpit: "Follow me! I have the truth." It's a cacophony of confusion that often leads people astray. The apostle John anticipated such a time when he wrote, "Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 Jn. 4:1).

How do we "test the spirits"? By asking these questions: Does the teacher's life reflect the life of Christ? Does the teacher proclaim salvation by grace through faith—not by works? Reliable teachers and leaders will always point us to Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life (Jn. 14:6), and not to themselves. Otherwise, they are merely blind leaders of the blind.

Let's choose with great care the leaders we follow. By: Dennis J. DeHaan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For Further Study

Read 1 John 2:4; 3:18-19; 4:2-3.

How can we be sure of knowing truth from error?

How does God help us? (4:4).

A good leader knows the way, shows the way, and goes the way.

### Matthew 15:15 Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable to us."

NET Matthew 15:15 But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us."

NLT Matthew 15:15 Then Peter said to Jesus, "Explain to us the parable that says people aren't defiled by what they eat."

ESV Matthew 15:15 But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us."

NIV Matthew 15:15 Peter said, "Explain the parable to us."

GNT Matthew 15:15 ποκριθε ς δ Π προς ε πεν α τ , Φρ σον μ ν τ ν παραβολ ν [τα την].

KJV Matthew 15:15 Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

- **Explain the parable:** Mt 13:36 Mk 4:34 7:17 Joh 16:29
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PETER SEEKS AN EXPLANATION

**Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable (parabole) to us** - Strictly speaking this was not a parable because Jesus spoke that they might understand it. The "parable" that Peter wanted Jesus to explain refers to the illustration of Mt 15:11. While it was not called a parable here, clearly it is a parabolic teaching. And it was not so much that the disciples did not understand what Jesus meant as that they found it hard to accept, Just as had the crowd and the scribes and Pharisees.

**Explain** is the verb **phrazo** in the [aorist imperative](#) and is used only here in the NT and meaning tell distinctly; in the NT explain, interpret, give the meaning, indicate plainly.

**Guzik** - Jesus didn't really speak in a parable (except for the brief illustration of the blind leading the blind). Yet because the disciples did not understand Him, they asked for an explanation

**Broadus** adds "The reference is not to the figurative saying of v. 14, called in Luke 6:39 a parable, but to v. 11, already spoken of in v. 12 as 'the saying.'"

**Wiersbe** - The meaning seems obvious to us, but it was astonishingly new to orthodox Jews.

### Matthew 15:16 Jesus said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also?"

NET Matthew 15:16 Jesus said, "Even after all this, are you still so foolish?"

NLT Matthew 15:16 "Don't you understand yet?" Jesus asked.

ESV Matthew 15:16 And he said, "Are you also still without understanding?"

NIV Matthew 15:16 "Are you still so dull?" Jesus asked them.

GNT Matthew 15:16 ὁ ε πεν, κμ ν κα με ς σ νετο στε;

KJV Matthew 15:16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

- Mt 15:10 13:51 16:9,11 Isa 28:9,10 Mk 6:52 7:18 8:17,18 9:32 Lu 9:45 Lu 18:34 24:45 Heb 5:12
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Jesus said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also"** - NLT - "Don't you understand yet?" Jesus answers Peter's question by beginning with His own question in which He chides the "slow learner" (and all the disciples in Mk 7:18). Why are you so dull? Notice the pronoun **YOU**, which distinguishes the disciples from the Pharisees and the masses, neither of which had any understanding

Jesus' response reminds us of His rebuke in Mt 14:31+ "Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

**Constable** - The unbelieving multitudes were understandably ignorant, but Jesus' believing disciples should have known better. Jesus had taught them the priority of reality over ritual before (Mt 3:9; Mt 12:1–21).

KJV has "Are ye also **yet**" about which **Broadus** comments "The Greek has a strong word (**yet**), not elsewhere used in the New Testament, but which in later Greek has even yet as a well-established meaning; '**even yet**,' after all the instruction you have received, comp. Mt 16:9; Heb. 5:12."

**Wuest** (commenting on Mk 7:18) - "**Are you so lacking in understanding also**- The idea is, "You also, as well as the multitude?" It was a cause of disappointment to Jesus that His own chosen pupils were still under the spell of the Pharaic theological tradition and outlook. Gould says, "They had been trained in Judaism, in which the distinction between clean and unclean is ingrained, and could not understand a statement abrogating this." Expositors says: "The idea throughout is that ethical defilement is alone of importance, all other defilement, whether the subject of Mosaic ceremonial legislation or of scribe tradition, a trivial affair. Jesus here is a critic of Moses as well as the scribes, and introduces a religious revolution."

**Lacking in understanding** (801)(**asunetos** from **a** = without + **sunetos** = sagacious, discerning) describes the man who is a fool, who cannot learn the lesson of experience, who will not use the mind and brain that God has given to him. This person is without insight or understanding and is descriptive of unredeemed man's heart. This man has an inability to bring together facts and make sense out of them. In context this man has an inability to conclude from the creation there is a Creator. It is the man who is without insight into moral or religious things and thus is so blinded that evil is thought of as good and good as evil. All uses in NT (Mt 15:16; Mk 7:18; Ro 1:21, 31; 10:1).

**A T Robertson** - "In spite of all my teaching, are ye also like the Pharisees without spiritual insight and grasp?" One must never forget that the disciples lived in a Pharaic environment. Their religious world-outlook was Pharaic.

**MacArthur** - "With all I have taught during the last two years," the Lord was saying, "are you still like the multitudes who do not know what I am talking about? Do you still fail to comprehend the absolute superiority of spirituality over formality, of the internal over the external, of reality over the shadow?"

**Broadus** - The Jews had come very largely to confound ceremonial with moral defilement. To correct this confusion of ideas, our Lord points out that articles of food cannot really pollute, because they pass through the body and out of it, and do not 'enter the heart' (Mark 7:19), cannot affect the spiritual nature; but the sinful things which are uttered through the mouth, and proceed from the heart, constitute a real pollution.

**Lenski** notes that "Yet the idea that in themselves certain foods produced defilement merely by being eaten, apart from the condition



of the heart (whether it intended to disobey God or not), still confused Peter and the others for whom he spoke."

We know that Peter was not able to accept fully the idea that all foods were clean until his experience in (Acts 10:14ff).

### **Matthew 15:17 "Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated?"**

NET Matthew 15:17 Don't you understand that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach and then passes out into the sewer?

NLT Matthew 15:17 "Anything you eat passes through the stomach and then goes into the sewer.

ESV Matthew 15:17 Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled?

NIV Matthew 15:17 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body?"

GNT Matthew 15:17 ο νοε τε τι π ν τ ε σπορευ μενον ε ς τ στ μα ε ς τ ν κοιλ αν χωρε κα ε ς φεδρ να κβ λλεται;

KJV Matthew 15:17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

- **that:** Mt 7:19,20 Lu 6:45 1Co 6:13 Col 2:21,22 Jas 3:6
- **and is:** 2Ki 10:27
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated-** "In Mark's account, Jesus' adds, "because it does not go into his heart" (7:19). Because food is only physical, it can only affect the physical. It cannot defile the inner person, represented by the heart, because the physical and the spiritual are of two different orders. Physical pollution, no matter how corrupt, cannot cause spiritual or moral pollution. Ceremonies, rituals, and other external practices cannot cleanse a person spiritually, and failure to observe them cannot defile a person spiritually. Ceremonial cleansing, even under the Old Covenant, never did more than picture spiritual cleansing." (MacArthur)

**A T Robertson** - Christ expects us to make use of our νοῦς [nous], intellect, not for pride, but for insight. The mind does not work infallibly, but we should use it for its God-given purpose. Intellectual laziness or flabbiness is no credit to a devout soul.

**Bruce on eliminated** - "A vulgar word and a vulgar subject which Jesus would gladly have avoided, but He forces Himself to speak of it for the sake of His disciples. The idea is: from food no moral defilement comes to the soul; the defilement as there is, purely physically passing through the bowels into the place of discharge. Doubtless Jesus said this, otherwise no one would have put it into His mouth."

Jesus here is a critic of Moses as well as the scribes, and introduces a religious revolution.

-- Expositors Commentary

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**Akin** summarizes on the related passage (Mark 7:18-20) - What follows (vs. 18-20) is one of the most critically important spiritual lessons in all of the Word of God. We must not miss it.

- Defilement (impurity) is not external but internal (Mark 7:15, 18).
- Defilement is not gastrointestinal but cardiac (Mark 7:19).
- Defilement is not a matter of the stomach, it is a matter of the heart. (Mark 7:19)
- Defilement is not what goes in but what comes out (Mark 7:20).

Jesus' words are spiritually revolutionary! Religiously they are shocking. The real issues of religious and spiritual faith are internal not external. The focus is on the inside not the outside. Sin always proceeds, has its genesis from within. Food ends up in the stomach, but sin begins in the heart. Food is eaten, digested in the stomach and expelled (v. 19; lit. "Goes out into the drain or latrine"). Sin, however, remains in the heart, and then produces all manner of defilement and death. Basic problem: not what we do but who we are! 10 Real filth, impurity, defilement is inside and unseen, but it is there, and eventually it will show itself as vs. 21-23

make clear.

**Matthew 15:18 "But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man.**

NET Matthew 15:18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these things defile a person.

NLT Matthew 15:18 But the words you speak come from the heart-- that's what defiles you.

ESV Matthew 15:18 But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person.

NIV Matthew 15:18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man 'unclean.'

GNT Matthew 15:18 τ ὁ κ πορευ μενα κ το στ ματος κ τ ς καρδ ας ξ ρχεται, κ κε να κοινο τ ν νθρωπων.

KJV Matthew 15:18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

- Mt 15:11 12:34 1Sa 24:13 Ps 36:3 Pr 6:12 10:32 15:2,28 Lu 19:22 Jas 3:6-10 Rev 13:5,6
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DEFILEMENT IS AN INTERNAL PROBLEM

As Hank Williams said, "*your cheating heart will tell on you!*"

**But the things that proceed out** ([ekporeuomai](#)) **of the mouth come from the heart** ([kardia](#)) - In short Jesus says that sin begins in the **heart**. The **heart** represents the inner person, his thoughts, attitudes, desires, loyalties, and motives. The central moral thrust of the Sermon on the Mount is that the basis of all sin is the inner thought, not the outward act. A person commits the sin when he wants to do it, whether or not he ever carries it out in action (lust, anger, etc). **Proceed out** is in the [present tense](#) describing this evil as continually proceeding from within the man!

For a new start, ask God for a new heart.  
(Pray Ps 51:10+ and Ps 86:11NIV±)

**R T France** - "The heart is the source of man's true character, and therefore of his purity or impurity ... it is not merely the seat of emotion, but the true person as he really is, not just as he appears outwardly." (NICNT-Mt)

**MacArthur** - The **heart** ([kardia](#)) represents the inner person, his thoughts, attitudes, desires, loyalties, and motives.

**THOUGHT** - Given the crucial importance of the **heart** to every aspect of our life it behooves us all, enabled by the Holy Word and the Holy Spirit, to diligently put Solomon's commandment into daily practice (something sadly Solomon failed to do and it split the Kingdom of Israel in 1 Kings 11:1-12, in case you think the issue of the heart is a small matter) - **Watch** ([Lxx](#) = [tereo](#) in the [present imperative](#) -- see [our need to depend on the Holy Spirit to obey](#) this command) over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life. (Read extensive notes on Proverbs 4:23)

**Spurgeon** - I want to indicate THE NEST FROM WHICH THEY COME. Now that we have seen these evil beasts (IN THE LIST BELOW), we will go and look at their den....There is not even need for you to stretch out your hand to feel for this foul nest of unclean birds, you can keep your hand upon your bosom, and it will not be far off from the lair wherein these evil things are lurking, ready to leap forth whenever occasion offers. Our Lord Jesus Christ says, "All these evil things come from within." "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts." The source from which these rivers of pollution proceed is the natural heart of man. Sin is not a splash of mud upon man's exterior, it is a filth generated within himself.

**And those defile** ([koinoo](#)) **the man** - Jesus will proceed to give a dirty laundry list of what proceeds out of a depraved heart. The external will reveal the character of our heart. Reputation is what other people think about you. Character is what God knows is true about you (your heart)! Do not be deceived!

**ILLUSTRATION** - Rotten Within - After a violent storm one night, a large tree, which over the years had become a stately giant, was found lying across the pathway in a park. Nothing but a splintered stump was left. Closer examination showed that it was rotten at

the core because thousands of tiny insects had eaten away at its heart. The weakness of that tree was not brought on by the sudden storm; it began the very moment the first insect nested within its bark. With the Holy Spirit's help, let's be very careful to guard our purity (Pr 4:23+).

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**Heart** (2588) (**kardia**) does not refer to the physical organ but is always used figuratively in Scripture to refer to the seat and center of human life. The heart is the center of the personality, and it controls the intellect, emotions, and will. No outward obedience is of the slightest value unless the heart turns to God. **Kardia** is always used figuratively to center of our personality, to so to speak to our "**control center**" (to make a play on the "[air traffic control center](#)" at the airport which carefully guards and guides what flies in and what flies out. How applicable to our "hearts" which are so prone to wander!). In short **kardia** refers to the the [affective](#) center of our being wherein lies the capacity of moral preference and volitional desire. The **kardia** generates thoughts that make the decisions which the mind works out. In other words, our logic flows out of our heart-decisions and not vice versa. Gleason Archer called the **kardia**, the "desire-producer that makes us tick" for it is the place where our "desire-decisions" occur, and which establish who we really are. WHO ARE YOU? HAVE YOU HAD A HEART CHECK UP RECENTLY? We are assiduous to do this medically, but woefully lax in doing it spiritually (beloved, I speak from experience!). At regeneration God reverses the spiritual atherosclerosis of our old sinful heart by giving us a total heart transplant! Daily confession and repentance are thereafter necessary to avoid "spiritual atherosclerosis" and gradual, subtle hardening (and becoming cold to the things of God) of our heart! (Read and practice daily "preventative maintenance" = 1 Jn 1:9+, Pr 28:13+).

**Defile** (2840) (**koinoo** from **koinos** = common, defiled, unclean, unholy, profane, that which lies common or open to all) means to make common. In Scripture, **koinoo** means to make unclean, to profane (treat something with irreverence or contempt), to desecrate (to treat disrespectfully, irreverentially, outrageously), to render unhallowed, to pollute, to make or cause to become ritually unacceptable. The idea of **koinoo** is a violation of ritual holiness. 11x in NT - Matt. 15:11; Matt. 15:18; Matt. 15:20; Mk. 7:15; Mk. 7:18; Mk. 7:20; Mk. 7:23; Acts 10:15; Acts 11:9; Acts 21:28; Heb. 9:13

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### **Oswald Chambers - The Account With Purity** "Out of the heart proceed ..." Matthew 15:18-20

We begin by trusting our ignorance and calling it innocence, by trusting our innocence and calling it purity; and when we hear these rugged statements of Our Lord's, we shrink and say - But I never felt any of those awful things in my heart. We resent what Jesus Christ reveals. Either Jesus Christ is the supreme Authority on the human heart, or He is not worth paying any attention to. Am I prepared to trust His penetration, or do I prefer to trust my innocent ignorance? If I make conscious innocence the test, I am likely to come to a place where I find with a shuddering awakening that what Jesus Christ said is true, and I shall be appalled at the possibility of evil and wrong in me. As long as I remain under the refuge of innocence I am living in a fool's paradise. If I have never been a blackguard, the reason is a mixture of cowardice and the protection of civilized life; but when I am undressed before God, I find that Jesus Christ is right in His diagnosis.

The only thing that safeguards is the Redemption of Jesus Christ. If I will hand myself over to Him, I need never experience the terrible possibilities that are in my heart. Purity is too deep down for me to get to naturally: but when the Holy Spirit comes in, He brings into the centre of my personal life the very Spirit that was manifested in the life of Jesus Christ, viz., Holy Spirit, which is unsullied purity.

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### **How Are You?**

Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart. —Matthew 15:18

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:10-20

When people greet each other, they usually say, "How are you?" At one time in China, the typical greeting was, "Have you eaten?" In the days of poverty, asking our friends if they had eaten was to express our concern for their well-being.

Today when friends greet me, they often say, "Have you put on weight?" Whether they're genuinely concerned for my health, or just think I should lose a few pounds, they care about me.

Everything we say, not just our greetings, reflects the concerns of our heart. Jesus said, "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart" (Matthew 15:18). He was explaining to His disciples that people could not be morally contaminated by the food they ate, but by words spoken out of unclean hearts.

It was not strange that Jesus' bold statements offended the Pharisees (v.12). They were great at appearing righteous on the outside, but they had no concern for the hypocrisy in their hearts. As Christ's disciples, however, our focus should be on keeping our hearts clean so that our words will reflect genuine righteousness.

It is wise to think about the words you use throughout the day, wherever you go. What do they say about the condition of your heart? —By: Albert Lee ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Do others know from words you speak

At home, at work, at play,

That Jesus lives within your heart

And governs what you say? —

D. De Haan

To rule your tongue, let Christ reign in your heart.

---

## What Do You Think?

Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart. —Matthew 15:18

Today's Scripture: Psalm 94:1-11

How would you like to have your every thought for the past 6 months flashed on a screen for all your acquaintances, neighbors, and church friends to see? You would probably want to leave town! It is sobering to realize that even though we can hide our thoughts from others, God knows what we're thinking (Ps. 94:11).

We need to give careful attention to our thoughts not only because God knows them but also because our thoughts determine our character. Jesus said that our words and actions spring from our heart (Mt. 15:18-19).

While visiting Mammoth Cave in Kentucky, one can see enormous pillars that have been formed by the steady dropping of water. A single drop finds its way from the surface down through the ceiling of the cavern to deposit its minute sediment on the floor of the cave. Another drop follows it, and still another, until the "icicle of stone" forms a pillar of rock.

A similar process is going on in each of our hearts. Every thought that sinks into the soul makes its contribution, producing the pillars in our character. The ideas you hold in your mind help to form the facets of your personality that make up the real "you."

So, how is your thought-life? —Henry G. Bosch (ODB Editor 1956-1981) By: Henry G. Bosch ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Thought-life, though hidden, is often revealed,

Shown in our speech and behavior;

It is God's will that our thoughts always be

Captive to Jesus our Savior.

—Hess

Pure thinking builds godly character.

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## Trying to Impress

Out of the heart come evil thoughts . . . . These are what defile a person. Matthew 15:19–20

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 15:1–11, 16–20

When a college class went on a cultural field trip, the instructor almost didn't recognize one of his star pupils. In the classroom she had concealed six-inch heels beneath her pant legs. But in her walking boots she was less than five feet tall. "My heels are how I want to be," she laughed. "But my boots are how I really am."

Our physical appearance doesn't define who we are; it's our heart that matters. Jesus had strong words for those masters of appearances—the super-religious "Pharisees and teachers of the law." They asked Jesus why His disciples didn't wash their hands before eating, as their religious traditions dictated (Matthew 15:1–2). Jesus asked, "Why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?" (v. 3). Then He pointed out how they had invented a legal loophole to keep their wealth instead of caring for their parents (vv. 4–6), thus dishonoring them and violating the fifth commandment (Exodus 20:12).

If we obsess over appearances while looking for loopholes in God's clear commands, we're violating the spirit of His law. Jesus said that "out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality," and the like (Matthew 15:19). Only God, through the righteousness of His Son Jesus, can give us a clean heart. By: Tim Gustafson ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand](#)

[Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, we are so prone to rely on our own efforts to impress You and others. Help us to be authentic in all our relationships, and to enjoy the restored heart we can have through Your forgiveness.

When our motive is to impress others, we're not impressing God.

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### Words That Defile

He who guards his mouth preserves his life, but he who opens wide his lips shall have destruction. —Proverbs 13:3

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:17-20

Recently I overheard an older woman speaking to a friend about the current obsession with dieting. "These days," she mused, "I'm more concerned with what comes out of my mouth than what goes into it." There's a world of wisdom in those words.

Jesus put it this way: "Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man" (Matthew 15:18-20).

What we say affects others. "There is one who speaks like the piercings of a sword," says Proverbs 12:18. But what we may overlook is the effect our reckless words have on us. When we gossip, or when we malign others, our words begin to ruin us, for we gratify the evil that is in us and strengthen it until it overthrows us.

On the contrary, when we guard our lips we strike a blow at this malevolence. "The tongue of the wise promotes health," continues Proverbs 12:18. We protect our souls, for we weaken the very thing that lies in wait to ruin us.

Ask God to "set a guard" over your mouth and "keep watch over the door" of your lips (Psalm 141:3). Let your words promote life, not destruction. By: David H. Roper ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Guard well your lips, for none can know  
What evils from the tongue may flow;  
What guilt, what grief may be incurred  
By one uncautious, evil word.  
—Elliott

A word from your mouth speaks volumes about your heart.

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### It's All About The Heart

Those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart. — Matthew 15:18

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:7-20

Every time Susan opens her mouth, it sounds like the blare of an ambulance siren. This TV commercial uses humor to indicate that a dental problem could reveal a more serious physical ailment. So she'd better see her dentist soon!

The commercial made me think about what comes out of my mouth when I open it. Jesus said that our words come from our heart (Matt. 15:18). He offended the Pharisees when He said, "Not what goes into the mouth defiles a man; but what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man" (vv.11-12). They thought they were right with God because they followed strict rules, including ritual cleansing of their hands before eating and eating only "clean" foods. Jesus upset their pride.

Jesus upsets our pride too. We may think we're godly people because we go to church regularly or pray, but then we gossip or talk about people behind their backs. James 3:9-10 says, "With [our tongue] we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men . . . . Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. . . . These things ought not to be so."

If a siren blares from our mouth when we open it, we need to examine our heart and ask the Lord to forgive us and to help us be a blessing to others. By: Anne Cetas ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Lord, cleanse our hearts so what we speak  
Will be reflective of Your grace;

And help us to control our tongues  
So we'll not bring on You disgrace.  
—Sper

Every time you speak, your mind is on parade.

**Matthew 15:19 "For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders.**

NET Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil ideas, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

NLT Matthew 15:19 For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.

ESV Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

NIV Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander.

GNT Matthew 15:19 κ γ ρ τ ς καρδ ας ξ ρχονται διαλογισμο πονηρο , φ νοι, μοιχε αι, πορνε αι, κλοπα , ψευδομαρτυρ αι, βλασφημ αι.

KJV Matthew 15:19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

- **out:** Ge 6:5 8:21 Pr 4:23 6:14 22:15 24:9 Jer 17:9 Mk 7:21-23 Ro 3:10-19 7:18 8:7,8 Ga 5:19-21 Eph 2:1-3 Titus 3:2-6
- **evil:** Mt 9:4 Ps 119:113 Isa 55:7 59:7 Jer 4:14 Ac 8:22 Jas 1:13-15
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Isaiah 29:13 Then the Lord said, "Because this people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote,

Isaiah 59:13 Transgressing and denying the LORD, And turning away from our God, Speaking oppression and revolt, Conceiving in and uttering from the heart lying words.

Ecclesiastes 9:3 This is an evil in all that is done under the sun, that there is one fate for all men. Furthermore, the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil and insanity is in their hearts throughout their lives. Afterwards they go to the dead.

Mark 7:21+ "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries,

### THE HEART OF MAN'S PROBLEM IS THE PROBLEM OF HIS HEART!

**For out of the heart** ([kardia](#)) **come** -Defilement is an "inside job" so to speak! The root problem of all men's sin is their wicked, depraved, spiritually uncircumcised heart! The heart is like a "root" and the sin is the "fruit" of that corrupt "root" and it is an ugly, despicable and destructive crop to behold! Jesus proceeds to list these sins (not all inclusive of course and shorter than the list in Mark's account - Mark 7:21+) to drive home the truth that all defilement originates from our defiled heart.

Spoken words come out of the heart and so are a true index of character.

The problem with man is his heart...hard...obstinate...rebellious...cold...sick. It's the heart we inherited from Adam (thanks Adam). But because of the finished work on the Cross and the New Covenant cut for us in the Savior's blood (Heb 13:20, 21), we can obtain the much needed "heart" transplant" by which our hearts of stone are supernaturally replaced by a heart of flesh which now desires to be obedient to God (Ro 6:17) & has the inherent power of His Spirit to carry out this heretofore impossible task (Ezek 36:26,27, Acts 1:8). So now we can "kill" (mortify) the members of our earthly body in regard to these evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,

fornications, etc (see Col 3:5, Ro 8:13). How desperate Jesus' listeners should have been...parched & thirsty for relief to their weary sin laden souls, desperate to drink from the living waters His cleansing blood alone could provide. But their hearts were hard & obstinate (Mt 23:37 Lu 13:34).

**Spurgeon on the heart** - But what is meant here, do you think, by "**the heart**?" Is it not intended to indicate the man himself—the man's most real self? Sin is sin for the most part because it is of the **heart** and the will. If the man's heart had nothing to do with it, I do not see how it would be sin. If a man had no will in the matter, where would his responsibility be? It is because we willingly do evil that we sin. The essence of the sin lies in the will to do it, and the full consent of the **heart** therein. The **heart** is the center of life, the core of being, the place where manhood maintains its throne, and what a terrible statement this is, that out of the very center of life there proceeds from man "evil thoughts, wickedness, blasphemy," and the like! The **heart** is the spring of action, the **heart** suggests, resolves, designs and sets the whole train of life in motion, the **heart** gives the impulse and the force, and yet out of the **heart** thus initiating and working proceeds all this mischief of sin. By the **heart** is meant mainly the affections, but it often includes the understanding and the will, it is, in fact, the man's vital self. Sin is not ab extra that comes to us and afflicts us like robbers, breaking into our house at night, but it is a tenant of the soul, dwelling within us as in its own house. This evil worm has penetrated into the kernel of our being, and there it abides. Sin has intertwined itself with the warp and woof of our nature, and none can remove it but the Lord God Himself. As long as the heart remains unchanged, out of it will proceed that which is sinful. "Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually." If it is so, that the nest in which sin is born and nurtured is the heart itself, we always carry about with us by nature that which will surely be the cause of sin unless we look well to it, and cry daily for grace to conquer it. This evil nature of ours is an always present danger; it is a powder magazine which at any moment may explode. **Oh for grace (ED: AND THE SPIRIT OF GRACE) to keep our hearts with all diligence!** (Proverbs 4:23<sup>+</sup>)

**Spurgeon** calls this list a "**swarm of sins**" adding "I seem to have broken open a wasp's nest, and the stinging creatures fly out, in number numberless! Here are thirteen words, each one of them teeming with all manner of evils. Matthew, when he condenses the Savior's utterances, mentions seven of these horrible things, one of which is omitted here, but Mark is fuller in this instance, and mentions thirteen items of abomination. I am struck with the legion of foul spirits which are here set free, as if the door of the bottomless pit had been opened. As armies of locusts, or as swarms of the flies of Egypt, so are sins. As the wilderness was full of fiery serpents and scorpions, so is this world full of iniquities. The very names of them are a pain to the ear. Let us bow our heads in sorrow as we read the muster-roll of this legion of terror, "Evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, thefts, murders, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Now, notice first, that this awful catalog, this horrible list of the unclean birds that find a cage within the human heart, begins with things that are lightly regarded among men—"evil thoughts." "We shall not be hanged for our thoughts," cries one. I wish that such idle talkers would remember that they will be damned for their thoughts, and that instead of evil thoughts being less sinful than evil acts, it may sometimes happen that in the thought the man may be worse than in the deed. He may not be able to carry out all the mischief that lurks within his designs, and yet in forming the design he may incur all the guilt. **Thoughts are the eggs of words and actions, and within the thoughts lie compacted and condensed all the villainy of actual transgressions. If men did but more carefully watch their thoughts, they would not so readily fall into evil habits, but men first indulge the thought of evil, and then the imagination of evil, nor does the process stay there. Picturing it before their mind's eye, they excite their own desires after it; these grow into a thirst and kindle into a passion. Then the deed is speedily forthcoming, it was long in the hatching, but in a moment it comes forth to curse a whole lifetime.** Instead of fancying that evil thoughts are mere trifles, let us regard them as the root of bitterness, the still in which the poisonous spirit is manufactured. Our Savior here puts evil thoughts first in the catalog of evil things, and He knew well their true nature. If we would be lost we have only to indulge these, if we would be saved we must conquer these. Let us make a conscience of our thoughts, he that does not so will not long make a conscience of his words or deeds. Let us pray God to purge us in the inward parts, lest perhaps, by entertaining vain thoughts as lodgers within our hearts, they take up their residence, become masters of our lives, and drive us onward to the outward sins which shall utterly pollute and defile us in the eyes of our fellow men. Since this indictment begins with evil thoughts, who among us can plead guiltless? Since evil thoughts are the first of sins, we had better meet the charge with immediate repentance and an instant faith in the only Savior. These thoughts come into our minds in the house of God, they intrude into our prayers, they defile our psalms, and they disturb our meditations. Is there a sacred hill so high; is there a quiet valley so deep, that therein we may be quite clear from these "evil thoughts"? Who can deliver us from this plague but the Lord our God? We need to humble ourselves at the first reading of this list, and cry unto the Lord for mercy. Carefully notice the range which this catalog takes. It is a very singular one, for it begins with thoughts, and then it runs on until it lands us in utter want of thought, or foolishness.

We see this eruption of internal evil almost almost immediately after sin entered the world, Moses recording "Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that **every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**" (Ge 6:5)

As **Spurgeon** said "The source from which these rivers of pollution proceed is the natural heart of man. Sin is not a splash of mud upon man's exterior, it is a filth generated within himself...I sicken as I think how man has plagued his fellow-men by his sins. But I

will not go through the list, nor need I: the devil has preached upon this text this week, and few have been able to escape the horrible exposition. A foul exhalation has entered into every house in this great city, polluting the very atmosphere, and spreading moral infection. Oh for a hurricane to sweep away the pestilent vapor! Within a narrow space a multitude of iniquities have gathered like vultures upon a mass of carrion. What a collection of sins may meet in a single story! How soon does one transgression call to its fellows, till "a little one has become a thousand and a small one a strong nation!" Alas, alas for the multitudes of sins!"

**Broadus** - After the general phrase **evil thoughts**, our Lord specifies violations of the sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth Commandments in order. Mark adds some other sins not mentioned by Matt. The plural forms which Matt. has throughout (even 'false witnessings') remind us of the numerous instances and different varieties of these several sins.

The heart is the cage from whence these unclean birds fly forth.

-- Spurgeon

**Evil** ([kakos](#)) **thoughts** ([dialogismos](#)) - Evil thoughts precede evil deeds! **Evil thoughts** are like a spring that is "contaminated" at the fountainhead, for it is from the bad thinking which come bad actions which are described in this "vice list." **Evil thoughts** is not merely evil thoughts but evil devisings which issue in degraded acts and vices now mentioned. As discussed below these **thoughts** are not just random ideas that come into one's mind but reflect the fallen, fleshly, sinful mind reasoning carefully and thoroughly! So it is no surprise that the verb proceed is in the present tense, depicting our depraved mind and continually "calculating" how to carry out evil deeds! You can mark it down, that evil is not just "out there" (in the world), but is "in here" (in our heart) which contains a veritable cesspool of sin that literally "gushes out" of us, including believers unless "by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body!" (Ro 8:13+) As **J.C. Ryle** said "We have within us the beginning of every sin under heaven."

"Ill-thinking is put first, and unthinking is put last."

---Matthew Henry

**Murders** ([phonos](#)), **adulteries** ([moicheia](#)), **fornications** ([porneia](#)), **thefts** ([klope](#)), **false witness** ([pseudomarturia](#)), **slanders** ([blasphemia](#)) - 'This list reads a lot like Paul's list in Galatians 5 (below) describing the "deeds of the flesh (which) are evident." **'Murders'** begin not with the dagger, but with the malice of the soul (see Jesus below). **Adulteries** and **fornications'** are first gloated over in the heart before they are enacted by the body. The heart is the cage from whence these unclean birds fly forth." (Spurgeon)

Galatians 5:19-21+ Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, 21 envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice (PRACTICE DOES NOT MAKE PERFECT BUT WILL TAKE ONE TO HELL!) such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Matthew 5:21-22+ "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT **MURDER**' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' 22 "But I say to you that everyone who is **angry with his brother** shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, 'You good-for-nothing,' shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, 'You fool,' shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell.

**Spurgeon** on **murders** - Actual murders follow frequently upon unbridled passion, but forget not that the command, "You shall not kill," may be broken by anger, hate, malice, and the desire for revenge. Many a murderer in heart may be among us this day, being angry at his brother without a cause. He that conceives and hides malice in his soul is a murderer before God. This form of evil breeds all manner of harm to society.

Jesus declared "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT **COMMIT ADULTERY**'; but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already **committed adultery** with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27-28+) Notice where the adultery is committed? In the heart, which in the present passage is the source of all evil thoughts! So we are not surprised with this heinous sin takes root in one's heart it brings forth a rotten crop of sexual perversion, child pornography, incest, infidelity, and the lurid list goes on. Oh, thank God for the liberating, empowering Gospel of God and the Spirit of God (Ro 8:13+)!

**THOUGHT Warning to men** (I am looking in the mirror as I write these words!) - We are under full scale attack being waged by Satan and the [world](#) (under his control - 1Jn 5:19+) to [sully](#) our love for Jesus (cf Rev 2:4+) and steal our love from our spouse! How? Very simple answer - internet pornography. Remember that secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven! And remember that this sin is especially deceitful as it promises passing pleasure but hides persisting painful consequences (Ps 32:3-4+ cf Heb 3:13+, Heb 11:25+). Part of deceit is that it will take you deeper and deeper into the dark world of sexual sin (Do not be deceived!) And unless we confess to God (Ps 32:5, 1-2+, 1Jn 1:9+, Pr 28:13+) (and our accountability partner [you do have another trusted man in your life I pray] -- I personally do not recommend to your wife lest it defile her mind and



disturb her trust) and repent, Proverbs 5:22+ will not just be a *proverb* (something that might happen) but a *reality* (something that will happen) "His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin." Woe!

**Spurgeon** on **thefts** - Thefts in all their shapes are also injurious to the commonwealth. By this we mean not only robberies, but all taking from others unjustly, such as the oppression of the poor in their wages, the taking of undue advantage in trading, the incurring of debts without hope of being able to pay, and the like—these are varied forms of dishonesty, and are full of injury to others

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**Murders** (5408) (**phonos**) is a noun describing killing, murder, slaughter, in classical Greek referring to the literal killing of someone. Depriving one of life by illegal or intentional act. Those reject the knowledge of God, He gives over to a depraved mind which includes those "filled with...murder" (Ro 1:29). Jesus described Saul's heart declaring "out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders." (Mt 15:19, Mk 7:21) **Phonos** describes Barabbas the murderer Pilate released instead of Jesus (Lk 23:19, 25+). In the future pouring out of God's wrath in the Tribulation, even after the horrible plagues the earth dwellers "did not repent of their murders." (Rev 9:21). Murder is in direct opposition to the Sixth Commandment which is still valid. (Ex. 20:13; Deut 5:17).

**Adulteries** (3430) (**moicheia** from **moicheuo** = commit adultery) describes an act of sexual intercourse with someone not one's own spouse. **Moicheia** is a subclass of **porneia**, which includes all sexual sins. **Moicheia** involves at least one person who is married. 3x - Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21; Jn. 8:3. Three times in the Septuagint - Jer. 13:27; Hos. 2:2; Hos. 4:2. Gilbrant adds that "In the ancient world marital fidelity was expected of the wife only. Acts of adultery between an unmarried man and a married woman or between two married individuals, however, were not tolerated. Yet, a married man's visit to a prostitute was not regarded as adultery. Thus the ancient world endorsed a double standard for determining adultery. This is radically different from the Biblical attitude where adultery is seen as a violation of the original, divinely instituted marriage bond (Genesis 2:23f.; Exodus 20:14). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary) In sum **adultery** is "violating the marriage covenant by engaging in sexual behavior mentally (Mt 5:28) or physically with someone you are not married to. The 7th commandment (Ex. 20:14; Deut. 5:18)" (Akin)

**Fornications** (**porneia** from root verb **pernao** = to sell, **porneuo** = to play the harlot; **pornos** = male prostitute; Eng - pornography) originally referred to any excessive behavior or lack of restraint, but eventually became associated with sexual excess and indulgence, of every kind of extramarital, unlawful, or unnatural sexual intercourse. It refers to general sexual acts outside of legal marriage. Sex was often linked to pagan religious practice, with the idolatrous worship of false gods (TDNT) Loose morals were a continuous problem in the Greco-Roman world.

**Thefts** (2829) (**klope** from **klepto** = to steal; Eng - **kleptomaniac**) is straightforward and means theft or stealing. **Liddell-Scott** adds "I. theft, Lat. furtum, Aesch., Eur. II. a secret act, fraud, Eur., Aeschin.; klope| by stealth or fraud, Soph.; *podoin klopān aresthai*, i.e. to steal away, Id. III. the surprise of a military post, Xen. 4x in the Septuagint - Gen. 40:15; Prov. 9:17; Jer. 48:27; Hos. 4:2; and twice in the NT = Matt. 15:19; Mk. 7:21. Barclay adds that "In Greek, there are two words for a robber—kleptēs and lēstēs. Lēstēs is a brigand; Barabbas was a lēstēs (John 18:40), and a brigand may be a very brave man although an outlaw. Kleptēs is a thief; Judas was a kleptēs when he pilfered from the box (John 12:6). A kleptēs is a mean, deceitful, dishonourable pilferer, without even the redeeming quality of a certain audacious gallantry that a brigand must have."

**Evil** (bad, harm) (2556) (**kakos** related word = **kakia**) is a word which basically denotes a lack of something so that it is "bad" or "not as it ought to be. The very sound of the word as it is pronounced, suggests the idea in the word "reprehensible!" **Kakos** means not meeting accepted standards of behavior, and thus worthless, bad or inferior. **Kakos** then speaks of lack of goodness, of a bad nature. One of the more frightening uses of **kakos** (personal opinion) is in the phrase "inventors of evil" (Ro 1:30). **Kakos** stands for "whatever is evil in character, base," **Kakos** is antithetic to **kalos**, "fair, advisable, good in character," and to **agathos**, "beneficial, useful, good in act;" hence **kakos** denotes what is useless, incapable, bad.

**Thoughts** (1261) (**dialogismos** from **diá** = through or as a preposition to intensify meaning of +**logizomai** = reckon, take an inventory, conclude; Eng = *dialogue*) means literally reasoning through and so to think or reason with thoroughness and completeness, think out carefully, reason thoroughly, consider carefully, weighing. In the Greek writings dialogismos described the thinking of a man deliberating with himself. It refers to calculated consideration (good or bad as discussed below). It pictures one deliberating with one's self which conveys the basic meaning of inner reasoning.

**False witness** (5577) (pseudomarturia from pseudēs = false + marturia = witness) speaks of encouraging a false judgment. One who deliberately gives false testimony or commits perjury. The proper sphere of the terms is the legal one, e.g., in trials or legal transactions. What is signified is personal testimony to events, relations, persons, etc. **Gilbrant** - In classical literature this term appears primarily in legal contexts and is translated "perjury" or "false witness" (*Liddell-Scott*). The word is also used in the Septuagint. Its use in Matthew 26:59 continues the legal sense of false testimony. Those who desired to see Jesus executed purposefully sought out false testimony that could be used to build a case against Him. The only other New Testament occurrence of

the word (Matthew 15:19) lists “false witness” as one of the evil emanations of the human heart that defile an individual. ([Complete Biblical Library](#))

Three uses in NT - Matt. 15:19; Matt. 26:59; 1 Co. 15:15. Not in the Septuagint.

**Slanders**(988)(**blasphemia** from **blapto** = injure, hurt + **pheme** = report, rumor, fame from **phemi** = to speak; cf **blasphemeo**) refers to verbal abuse against someone which denotes the very worst type of slander. It is speech which seeks to wound someone's reputation by evil reports, evil speaking. Abusive speech against someone by telling lies or otherwise offending them. In Classical Greek **blasphemia/blasphemeo** represented the strongest expression of personal defamation. **Blasphemia** means literally **to speak to harm** and in general therefore means to bring into ill repute and so to slander, to **defame**. "The word does not necessarily speak of blasphemy against God. It is used of reviling, calumny, evil-speaking in general, malicious misrepresentation."

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### Whose Mess?

Out of the heart come evil thoughts . . . . These are what defile a person. —Matthew 15:19-20

Today's Scripture & Insight: Matthew 15:7-21

“Could they not carry their own garbage this far?” I grumbled to Jay as I picked up empty bottles from the beach and tossed them into the trash bin less than 20 feet away. “Did leaving the beach a mess for others make them feel better about themselves? I sure hope these people are tourists. I don’t want to think that any locals would treat our beach with such disrespect.”

The very next day I came across a prayer I had written years earlier about judging others. My own words reminded me of how wrong I was to take pride in cleaning up other people’s messes. The truth is, I have plenty of my own that I simply ignore—especially in the spiritual sense.

I am quick to claim that the reason I can’t get my life in order is because others keep messing it up. And I am quick to conclude that the “garbage” stinking up my surroundings belongs to someone other than me. But neither is true. Nothing outside of me can condemn or contaminate me—only what’s inside (Matt. 15:19-20). The real garbage is the attitude that causes me to turn up my nose at a tiny whiff of someone else’s sin while ignoring the stench of my own. By: Julie Ackerman Link ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Forgive me, Lord, for refusing to throw away my own “trash.” Open my eyes to the damage that pride does to Your natural and spiritual creation. May I have no part of it.

Share this prayer from our Facebook page with your friends. [facebook.com/ourdailybread](https://www.facebook.com/ourdailybread)

Most of us are farsighted about sin—we see the sins of others but not our own.

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### Primitive Heart

Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts. —Matthew 15:19

Today's Scripture: 2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Some things just don’t seem to fit in our modern 21st century. A tribe of headhunters is one of them.

Yet there is one such group of people whose story is worth telling. A tribe living high in the Philippine mountains, a 3-day’s walk from the nearest city, has only within the past 10 years given up their tradition of displaying heads of captured enemies.

The leader of this tribe, a man who got that position because of his head-hunting success, was instrumental in the change. It came about because two women risked everything to travel to the village to live among the people and tell them about Jesus’ love. In 1999, 5 years after the women first visited the village, at least 50 people, including the chief, had trusted Christ to save them. As a result, the people’s lives were transformed, and they gave up their killing ways.

Headhunting may seem primitive, but its source is no different from the most modern sin. The same inborn evil that led Cain to murder Abel thousands of years ago (Genesis 4:8) still exists in human hearts today. All sin, new and old, has just one solution—Jesus Christ (2 Corinthians 4:3-6). Even in a modern world, He alone is the answer to the ancient problem of the sinful heart. Has He changed yours? By: Dave Branon ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

The heart of man is stained by sin,  
From Adam's fall this has been true;

Yet God in Christ can make a change—  
Through faith in Him we are made new.  
—Fitzhugh

Our heart is like a crooked fence—all the paint in the world won't straighten it out.

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**J Vernon McGee** - We are certainly seeing this working out in our contemporary culture (**ED: IMAGINE WHAT HE WOULD THINK IN 2020!**). We are in the period of the “new morality” and have reached the day that Isaiah talked about when he said that they would “... call evil good, and good evil ...” (Isa. 5:20). Those of us who believe the Bible are considered squares and entirely wrong. What do we have in this day of freedom, now that the lid has been taken off and man expresses what is in his heart? Do we have a new morality? No, we have the same old things—evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, false witness, blasphemy, and thefts. We have really opened a Pandora's box, and we are in trouble. Man has to be controlled. He is the most vicious animal on earth. We put other animals in cages, but man must be free to do his thing, and our Lord has told us what mankind will do, and He says that these things defile. All about us today is an emphasis on sex—in our schools, even in our churches, on television, on radio; it stares at you from billboards, from the covers of magazines, from newspaper headlines. My friend, these things defile. Don't tell me that you are immune to it; no one is immune to this type of thing. Our children and young people are being defiled—all in the lofty-sounding terminology of freedom of speech! The things that are in the heart are now coming out. Our Lord has made a tremendous statement here. (Thru the Bible)

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**D L Moody** - IF a man should advertise that he could take a correct photograph of people's hearts, do you believe he would find any customers? There is not a man among us whom you could hire to have his photograph taken, if you could photograph the real man. We go to have our faces taken, and carefully arrange our toilet, and if the artist flatters us, we say, “Oh, yes, that's a first-rate likeness,” and we pass it around among our friends. But let the real man be brought out, the photograph of the heart, and see if we will pass that around among our neighbors! Why, we would not want our own wives to see it! We would be frightened even to look at it ourselves.

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**Brian Bell** - Sin is Potential (heart) before it is Actual (Mt 15:19,20) Jesus gives us a catalogue of 13 ugly sins. It is an X-ray of the human heart. All of these sins lurk as a **potential** inside of all of us. So Jesus calls for purity/holiness on the inside from a changed heart from God. Some, like the Pharisees of old, have a very defective theology of man & sin and think that man is intrinsically/inherently good???. 1. And because of this they treated symptoms w/their legalism, rather than dealing w/the root problem! 2. Yes the bible deals with the fruit of sin; but better...it deals w/the root of sin. It doesn't only deal w/the flow of sin; but the very fountain of sin. 3. The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately/incurably wicked; Who can know it? - For the wages of sin (not sins) is death. a) We are not sinners because we sin; we sin because we are sinners! H. Spurgeon, If sin had not been in you, it could not have come out. All the trouble in the world does not put sin in the Christian. It brings it out. 1. You might think, My wife makes me so angry! – But no, anger was already there in your heart & this just gave it opportunity to come out. So, what's the remedy? It's not education, culture change, social reform, nor revolution, but regeneration. The heart can be purified only by faith. Your choice: Keep polishing your broken watch; or receive a new mainspring, from The Watch-Maker, for your heart today. Ezek.36:26 I will give you a new heart & put a new spirit within you. 2. Any gospel which says only what you must do & never announce what Christ has done...is no gospel at all! a) We believe with the heart, love from the heart, sing from the heart, obey from the heart, give from the heart, and pray from the heart. www 3. We must constantly remind ourselves that true religion comes from this new heart.

In the forests of northern Europe and Asia lives little animal called the ermine, known for his **snow-white fur in winter**. He instinctively protects his white coat against anything that would soil it. Fur hunters take advantage of this unusual trait of the ermine. They don't set a snare to catch him, but instead they find his home, which is usually a cleft in a rock or a hollow in an old tree. They smear the entrance and interior with grime. Then the hunters set their dogs loose to find and chase the ermine. The frightened animal flees toward home but **doesn't enter because of the filth**. Rather than soil his white coat, he is trapped by the dogs and captured while preserving his purity. **For the ermine, purity is more precious than life.**

**Matthew 15:20 "These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."**

NET Matthew 15:20 These are the things that defile a person; it is not eating with unwashed hands that defiles a person."

NLT Matthew 15:20 These are what defile you. Eating with unwashed hands will never defile you."

ESV Matthew 15:20 These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."

NIV Matthew 15:20 These are what make a man 'unclean'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him 'unclean.' "

GNT Matthew 15:20 τὰ τὸ σὶν τὸ κοῖνο ἢ τὸ τῶν ἄνθρωπων, τὸ δὲ ἐν ταῖς χερσὶν φαγεῖν οὐ κοῖνο τὸν ἄνθρωπον.

KJV Matthew 15:20 These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

- **which defile the man:** 1Co 3:16,17 6:9-11,18-20 Eph 5:3-6 Rev 21:8,27
- **which defile the man:** Mt 15:2 23:25,26 Mk 7:3,4 Lu 11:38-40
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passage:

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?

Romans 1:28+ And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

Ps 24:3+ Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? And who may stand in His holy place? 4 He who has **clean hands** and a **pure heart**, Who has not lifted up his soul to falsehood And has not sworn deceitfully.

## SUMMARY OF DEFILEMENT

**These are the things which defile ([koinoo](#)) the man** - Our problem is not our environmental influences but our internal, infernal evil that is present in our hearts (Ro 5:12+). Ceremonially clean hands combined with a defiled heart will take a man to Hell because this heart still pours forth evil things and needs a "heart transplant" which is another way of describing entering the New Covenant by grace through faith in Christ (Eph 2:8-9+) and was described by the prophet Ezekiel...

Ezekiel 36:26-27+ "Moreover, I will give you a **new heart** and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.

**Spurgeon on defile ([koinoo](#)) the man** - sin always causes defilement to the man himself. He goes from bad to worse, from worse to worst. Sin is like a ladder. Few reach the height of iniquity at once, the most of men climb from one evil to another, and then to a third and a fourth. Sin hardens men to further sin. He who is a moral monster was not always such. By sinning much he learned to sin more. The door of his heart was at first a little ajar, but outgoing sin opened it to its full width. A man is not capable at first of the sins which afterwards are habitual to him. Step by step men descend into the abyss of infamy if their feet are not hindered by restraint, or stopped by almighty grace. Every sin produces a fresh degree of callousness in the heart. Even if sin is speedily repented of, its damage is not readily repaired, if its writing is erased you can see where it used to be. Even the passage of a momentary thought over the mind will leave a stain. See, then, the defiling power of sin.

**But** - Term of contrast. What is Jesus contrasting?

**To eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man**- The things that defile the man come from an unwashed heart, not from unwashed hands. The need is for God to cleanse our hearts, not for us to wash our hands. When a person is defiled on the inside, what he does on the outside is also defiled. But when a person is pure in heart-undefiled on the inside-he will see God (Mt 5:8).

**John Walvoord** - The occupation with the outward religious ceremony, instead of inner transformation of the heart, has all too often attended all forms of religion and has plagued the church as well as it has Judaism. How many Christians in church history have been executed for difference of opinion on the meaning of the Lord's Supper elements or the mode of baptism or for failure to bow to church authority? The heart of man, which is so incurably religious, is also incurably evil, apart from the grace of God.

**Brian Bill** - Every one is capable of every sin on the list the Lord just laid out. There is no heart where sin does not lurk. Romans 3:10-12+, Ro 3:23+: "None is righteous, no not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."...When confronted with his sinfulness and the horrors of his unholy heart, David prayed this in Psalm 51:9-10+: "Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Fellow sinner, your heart needs the help of heaven. Cry out to Jesus right now and ask Him for a new heart. Tell him that you want to be born again.

### What can wash away my sin?

Nothing but the blood of Jesus;  
What can make me whole again?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

Oh! precious is the flow  
That makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

<b>COMPARISON OF EXTERNAL VERSUS INTERNAL RELIGION VERSUS RELATIONSHIP NATURAL VERSUS SUPERNATURAL MAN MADE VERSUS GOD MADE FLESH PLEASING VERSUS GOD PLEASING</b>	
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External Religion	Internal Redemption
be clean physically and morally	Be born again and made into a new creature!
A clean exterior makes a clean interior	when the inside gets clean, it will clean up the outside
You must develop some rules to govern your behavior	I love God, therefore I will live right!
Be faithful to your church, its practices and its teaching and you will be clean.	Be cleansed by Jesus and you will be faithful to your church, its practices and its teachings
a man made system of ritual, ceremony, law and work	a work of God in the heart that produces a new creature

Adapted from [Alan Carr](#)

### **Matthew 15:21 Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon.**

NET Matthew 15:21 After going out from there, Jesus went to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

NLT Matthew 15:21 Then Jesus left Galilee and went north to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

ESV Matthew 15:21 And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

NIV Matthew 15:21 Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon.

GNT Matthew 15:21 Κα ξελθ ν κε θεν ησο ς νεχ ρησεν ε ς τ μ ρη Τ ρου κα Σιδ νος.

KJV Matthew 15:21 Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

- **went away from there** Mk 7:24
- **Tyre:** Mt 10:5,6 11:21-23 Ge 49:13 Jos 11:8 13:6 19:28,29 Jdg 1:31
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

[Tyre and Sidon](#)  
(Click to Enlarge)

**JESUS JOURNEYS TO  
GENTILE TERRITORY**

**Jesus went away from** (same word Mt 2:12, 22; 4:12; 12:15; 14:13) **there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon** ([note](#)) - Jesus' Ministry Beyond Galilee (see map). From there (Broadus things probably Capernaum) and headed northwest toward **the district of Tyre and Sidon** thus getting beyond the jurisdiction of Herod. Near Tyre, Jesus cast out a demon from the daughter of a Syro-Phoenician woman (Mark 7:24-30). Peter made his great confession at Caesarea Philippi (Mt 16:13-19). Jesus returned to Galilee via the Decapolis region, crossing the Jordan River south of the Sea of Galilee.

**Broadus** points out that "The jealousy of Herod (Mt 14:1 f.), the hostility of the Pharisees (Mt 12:14; 15:1, 12; also Mt 4:12; John 4:1-3), and the fanatical notions of the masses (John 6:15), still required that Jesus should withdraw from Galilee, as heretofore in Mt 14:13.

**Tyre** is a seaport city about 34 miles northwest of Capernaum (Sidon is 24 miles north on the coast) and is located in modern day Lebanon. One can only imagine the thoughts of the disciples as Jesus tells them they are heading for Gentile territory! Jesus has just declared all foods clean and now he in essence declares (by going to Tyre) all Gentiles "clean." Jesus is demonstrating a "Great Commission mentality," demonstrating that God's kingdom knows no ethnic, racial, national or gender barriers..

Mark tells us an additional fact about why Jesus went - "Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, **He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice**" (Mark 7:24+)

**James Edwards** says "**Tyre** probably represented the most extreme expression of paganism, both actually and symbolically, that a Jew could expect to encounter" (Pillar NTC-Mark)

**Mark Akin** says "Unfortunately, too many Jews of that day continued to suffer from "the Jonah complex." They could not imagine that God would extend His salvation beyond the borders of Israel. Jesus is about to turn all of that on its head. "From a socioreligious perspective, Jesus' visit to Tyre universalizes the concept of Messiah in terms of geography, ethnicity, gender and religion in a way entirely unprecedented in Judaism." (Edwards, Ibid). This Savior is not for just one nation, He is for all nations, and so should we be as well."

**Believer's Study Bible** - (Mt 15:21-28) This story serves as a significant "hinge paragraph" in Matthew's Gospel. Two feeding miracles bracket a shift in the audience from rejection to reception, and more importantly, from Jew to Gentile. This story serves as the apex of the entire section, and is a crucial turning point in Matthew's Gospel (cf. Mark 7:27, note).

**Constable** makes an excellent point - Jesus increased His ministry to Gentiles as He experienced increasing rejection from the Jews. This third withdrawal from Galilee took Jesus outside Palestine for the first time. Mark also recorded Jesus doing more things outside Galilee and fewer things within Galilee than the other evangelists. By pointing this out Mark helped his readers realize that ministry to Gentiles was God's will in view of Israel's final rejection of Jesus. There is a logical connection between this section and the one that precedes it (Mark 7:1-23). Jesus had explained why He did not observe the traditional separation from defiling associations. Now He illustrated that by going into Gentile territory. This contact would have rendered Him ceremonial unclean according to the Jews' traditions.

#### **Related Resources:**

- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Syrophenician](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Syrophenician](#) [Syrophenician](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Syrophenician](#)
- Vines' Expository Dictionary [Syrophenician](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Syrophenician](#)

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#### **Vance Havner - "As Thou Wilt" Matthew 15:21-28 Mark 7:24-30**

JESUS' ministry in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon is marked by the wonderful story of the Syrophenician woman (Matt. 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30). He had not planned a public ministry in these parts, but Mark tells us "He could not be hid." Neither can a true Christian be hidden; men will find him out.

This woman, outside the pale of His ministry to Israel, besought Him for her demonized daughter, but we read, "He answered her not a word." Prayer often meets such a Divine silence, but few of us press on to an answer as did this needy soul. Too often we take silence to mean refusal.

The disciples, bothered by her begging, asked our Lord to respond and send her away. These poor men were continually trying to handle the cases that came to Jesus, but not in His way. He answers, "I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel," which indicates that they had meant for Him to grant her request to get rid of her. It is another clear declaration of His ministry to the Jew first. "He came unto His own and His own received Him not."

Not rebuffed at this, the woman beseeches Him, "Lord, help me," identifying herself with her daughter's need. Still stronger is the Lord's reply: "It is not good to take the children's bread and to cast it to dogs." It is a severe answer. We pass over the sternness of our Lord in these soft, sentimental days. Had the woman come with less than genuine, importunate faith, this would have sent her away insulted—this calling the Jews "children" and the Gentiles "dogs." But our Lord uses the term for little household dogs, and the woman catches the clue. "True, we may not have the bread, but surely we may share the crumbs." Here is humility and perseverance that will not be denied! It is he who is willing to take crumbs who receives bread.

Such faith draws from our Lord the gracious answer: "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Notice, it is as thou wilt. There is a faith that desires and asks, but here faith goes further and wills. Jesus tells us (Mark 11:23) that whoever shall command a mountain to be moved and shall not doubt but believe, he shall have whatever he says. Mind you, He does not say, "Whosoever shall ask God to move the mountain," but "Whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed." Here is faith that dares to command. "Concerning the work of My hands, command ye Me" (Isa. 45:11). Mark tells us that He said, "For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy daughter." Such faith always sends us on our way; and as we go we are cleansed, as it was with the lepers (Luke 17:14). The woman went, Mark tells us, and found it even as He had said. So did the nobleman (John 4:51). Oh, how rare is the faith that takes Him at His word and goes on believing!

**Matthew 15:22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, 'Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed.'**

NET Matthew 15:22 A Canaanite woman from that area came and cried out, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David! My daughter is horribly demon-possessed!"

NLT Matthew 15:22 A Gentile woman who lived there came to him, pleading, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! For my daughter is possessed by a demon that torments her severely."

ESV Matthew 15:22 And **behold**, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon."

NIV Matthew 15:22 A Canaanite woman from that vicinity came to him, crying out, "Lord, Son of David, have mercy on me! My daughter is suffering terribly from demon-possession."

GNT Matthew 15:22 καὶ ἴδο γυν Χαναανα ἀπὸ τῶν κενῶν ξελθοῦσα κράζεν λέγουσα, ἰησοῦ με, κριε υἱοῦ Δαυὶδ· θυγτηρ μου κακὸς δαίμων ζεταί.

KJV Matthew 15:22 And, **behold**, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

- **woman**: Mt 3:8,9 Ps 45:12 Eze 3:6 Mk 7:26
- **Have**: Mt 9:27 17:15 Ps 4:1 6:2 Lu 17:13 18:13
- **Son of David**: Mt 1:1 20:30,31 22:42-45 Lu 18:38,39 Joh 7:41,42
- **my**: Mt 17:15 Mk 7:25 9:17-22
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mt 1:1+ The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the **son of David**, the son of Abraham.

Mark 7:25+ But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet.

Syrophoenician Woman Appeals to Jesus

## CANAANITE WOMAN CRIES OUT TO JESUS

The literal Greek is better than the NAS translations that leaves out the "kai idou" - ESV is more literal and has "**And behold** (see [idou](#))."

This was a scene that called for close attention, which is inherent in the command to "behold." Listen up! Pay attention! As Constable says "Matthew introduced this extraordinary story with an extraordinary word, "**Behold**." This is the only occasion where Jesus ventures beyond the border of Israel.

**And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying-** Matthew's use of the designation **Canaanite** would draw attention to the fact that she was a descendant of Israel's ancient enemies! This makes her approach to Jesus and Jesus' response to her all that much more radical! But then Jesus is radical! Mark tells us how she approached Jesus writing that "after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet (cf Mt 15:25)." (Mark 7:25+) She was on her knees **and began to cry out** ([krazo](#) denotes loud crying) in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating again and again she appealed to Jesus - a persistent prayer! (cf persistence in pleading = Mt 7:7+, Luke 18:1-8+) She was unwilling to give up! Clearly her request implies that she had some degree of faith or belief that Jesus had the authority over the demonic world. Since casting out of demons was a miracle that Jesus had frequently carried out in Israel (Mk 1:39+), it is also likely she had heard of His power to cast out demons. "Her persistent request for help demonstrated her faith in Jesus." (Constable) "Her love for her daughter, the horror of demonic power in her home, combined with her confidence in Jesus' power, fueled her unwavering resolve. That heartfelt persistence was matched by an attitude of humble penitence....Recognizing her own unworthiness, like the publican in Luke 18:13+, she begged for mercy on the basis of His inherent goodness, not her own." (MacArthur)

**Robertson** - The Phoenicians were descended from the Canaanites, the original inhabitants of Palestine. They were of Semitic race, therefore, though pagan.

**Carson** - "Matthew's used of the old term '**Canaanite**' shows that he cannot forget her ancestry: now a descendant of Israel's ancient enemies comes to the Jewish Messiah for blessing."

**Spurgeon** on Jesus going to Gentile country - "Let us always plow to the very end of the field, and serve our day and generation to the extreme limits of our sphere."

**Evans** - Why does Matthew change Mark's "woman ... a Gentile, of the Syro-Phoenician race" to a **Canaanite woman**? The evangelist does this once again to give his version a biblical flavor that will be appreciated by his Jewish readers. Twice in the Old Testament Tyre and Sidon are linked to Philistia, the nation that plagued Israel as it tried to occupy and consolidate its hold on the land of Canaan (cf. Jer. 47:4; Joel 3:4). But the most significant passage may be 2 Sam. 24:7, where Tyre is linked to the "Canaanites." Thus, a Canaanite woman in the region of Tyre and Sidon carries with it strong biblical associations. This is a person that represents a people historically antagonistic toward Israel and clearly outside the covenant and with no expectations of messianic blessings. (BKBC-Mt-Lk)

**John MacArthur** adds that in addition to the strikes of being a **woman** and a **Gentile**, "she came from an area that was engulfed in pagan idolatry and was undoubtedly an idol worshiper herself. Tyre and Sidon were major centers of worship for the fertility goddess Astarte, known as Ashtaroth in the Old Testament (cf. Jdg. 2:13; 10:6; 1 Sa. 7:3-4; 12:10; 31:10). In the minds of the Jews, no self-respecting rabbi would ever allow a Gentile, especially an idolatrous woman, to remain in his presence. The Lord wanted to show His disciples that the message of salvation was for the nations, those whom they had been taught were outside God's grace and blessing....according to Matthew 15:23, "His disciples came and implored Him, saying, 'Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.' " They found the woman bothersome and simply wanted her to be silenced and sent away. The Lord, however, intended to teach them a valuable lesson about the character of genuine faith. (MNTC-Mk)

**Cry out** (2896) ([krazo](#)) refers to a loud cry or vociferation, and is a strong word expressing deep emotion. **Krazo** is one of those [onomatopoeic](#) words, the very pronunciation of which imitates the hoarse cry of the raven ([listen](#)), and can be an inarticulate and brutish sound or an exclamation of fear or pain. Abbott-Smith says "generally used of inarticulate cries, *to scream, cry out* (Aesch., etc.)" It is used of the cry of an animal, the barking of a dog and two men in a quarrel, trying to bawl each other down (so Aristophanes, *Knights*, 1017) "The prophet in awful earnestness, and as with a scream of anguish, cries over Israel" (Morison) "**Krazō** was also a technical, rabbinic term to refer to the loud summons of a prophet, needing to be heard. In Lk 18:39+ the blind beggar cried "to cry clamorously; to scream or shriek." (You can almost hear him shrieking! He is motivated because he is blind and thinks this Man might help him see!) Uses in Matthew - Matt. 8:29; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 14:26; Matt. 14:30; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 15:23; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 27:23; Matt. 27:50;

#### Related Resources:

- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Canaanites](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Canaan: Canaanites Cananaean: Canaanite](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Canaanites](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Canaanites](#)



**Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David** - Mark says "the woman was a Gentile, of the Syro-Phoenician race. And she kept asking ([erotao](#) in the [imperfect tense](#) pleading again and again) Him to cast the demon out of her daughter." (Mark 7:26+) **Have mercy** (have pity) in the [aorist imperative](#) which speaks of her boldness and confidence. Notice the two titles she appeals to in making her request to Jesus (1) **Lord** ([kurios](#) - possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, sovereign, possessor of absolute authority, ownership rights and uncontested power.) and (2) **Son of David**. As Lord He had the power. As Messiah He had the authority.

**THOUGHT**- Notice the phrase **Have mercy on me**, not have mercy on my daughter! Do you see the difference? She had made her daughter's needs her own needs. This is a secret of strong intercessory prayer when we are praying for other's needs as if they are our own needs! I fear too often my intercession for others is not as passionate as it would be if I would take more "possession" of their needs! Lord God please help me pray like this Syro-Phoenician, Canaanite woman. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

This is an incredible scene for here is a pagan woman (she may have been a Gentile "God fearer" = Acts 13:16, 26+) who recognizes Jesus as the **Son of David**. She had spiritual eyes to see what the religious leaders and most of the Jewish populace failed to see even though their prophets had repeatedly told them of His coming (2Sa 7:13,16 Isa 11:1+ Jer 23:5 Jer 33:15-17, Zec 12:8+ Lu 1:31,32+ Lu 1:69,70+). It is notable that earlier we see an almost identical request of Jesus, Matthew writing "As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed Him, crying out ([krazo](#) in [present tense](#) - continually), "**Have mercy** ([eleeo](#)) on us, **Son of David!**"(Matt. 9:27+)

**John Phillips** has an interesting note - David's name was known in her part of the world. The Holy Spirit recorded that Hiram, a king of Tyre during the reigns of David and Solomon, was "ever a lover of David" (1 Kings 5:1). That may account for the way the woman addressed the Lord Jesus and cried to Him to have mercy on her and heal her child.

**Lenski** - She plainly reveals that she has knowledge of the Messianic hopes of Israel and had heard that they were being connected with Jesus as the promised great descendant of King David."

**Broadus** - She believed him to be the Messiah, as shown by her calling him Son of David. (Comp. on 9:27.) Though a heathen, and living in a heathen country, she was yet near the land of Israel, familiar with the true religion, and like the woman of Zarephath, a worshiper of the true God.

**Have mercy** (1653)([eleeo](#) from [eleos](#)) means "to feel sympathy with the misery of another, especially such sympathy which manifests itself in action, less frequently in word." Describes the general sense of one who has compassion or person on someone in need. It indicates being moved to pity and compassion by tragedy and includes the fear that this could happen to me. To see someone in dire need (including one who may not deserve the misfortune), to have compassion on them, and to give help to remove the need. Uses of [eleeo](#) in Matthew Matt. 5:7; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 17:15; Matt. 18:33; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31

**Son of David** - Only 25 verses in the Bible but especially in Matthew - 2 Sam. 13:1; 1 Chr. 29:22; 2 Chr. 1:1; 2 Chr. 11:18; 2 Chr. 13:6; 2 Chr. 30:26; 2 Chr. 35:3; Prov. 1:1; Eccl. 1:1; Matt. 1:1; Matt. 1:20; Matt. 9:27; Matt. 12:23; Matt. 15:22; Matt. 20:30; Matt. 20:31; Matt. 21:9; Matt. 21:15; Matt. 22:42; Mk. 10:47; Mk. 10:48; Mk. 12:35; Lk. 3:31; Lk. 18:38; Lk. 18:39

**Carson on Son of David** - "Son of David" is an important designation in Matthew. Not only does David become a turning point in the genealogy (Mt 1:6, 17), but the title recurs throughout the Gospel (9:27; 12:23; 15:22; 20:30-31; 21:9, 15; 22:42, 45)...In Jesus' day at least some branches of popular Judaism understood "son of David" to be messianic....The theme was important in early Christianity (cf. Luke 1:32, 69; John 7:42; Acts 13:23; Rom 1:3; Rev 22:16). God's promises, though long delayed, had not been forgotten; Jesus and his ministry were perceived as God's fulfillment of covenantal promises now centuries old. The tree of David, hacked off so that only a stump remained, was sprouting a new branch (Isa 11:1). (EBC)

**Disciple's Study Bible** - The foreigner correctly identified Jesus as Messiah, but she gained healing for her daughter through persistent faith, not proper identification. The first messianic title applied to Jesus in the New Testament is **Son of David**. This title for Jesus provides a major link between the Old Testament and the New. Both Matthew's and Luke's genealogies are at pains to establish that Jesus is descended from David (Mt 1:6+; Lk 3:31+). This enabled early believers to claim the Old Testament promise that there would always be an heir to David's throne (2 Sa 7; Ps 132:11-12+). Compare Ro 1:3+. The crowds and individuals in need often used this title for Jesus (Mt 9:27+; Mt 15:22; 20:31; Lk 18:38+). Jesus did not use the title for Himself, possibly because it was so open to political interpretation. Jesus had to show He fulfilled Old Testament expectations. He did so by fulfilling the role of the Suffering Servant and letting all other titles be understood in that light. Thus He fulfilled the role of the true kings of Israel, that of servant (2 Sa 7:19) and shepherd (2 Sa 7:7). See note on 1 Ch 17:23-27.

**My daughter is cruelly demon-possessed** - Not just demon-possessed which would be bad enough, but **cruelly** ([kakos](#)) which

means severely, badly, harmfully, although she does not specify how the demon was harmful to her daughter. Mark 7:25+ uses a diminutive term (thugatron) for **daughter**, meaning *'little daughter,'* which shows that she was a child.

**Demon-possessed** (1139)(**daimonizomai** from **daimonion** = demon) means to be possessed by a demon, to be under the power of a demon, to act under the control of a demon. In Lk 8:36+ note the striking contrast between Jesus a Man under the control of the Spirit, empowered by the Spirit (Lk 4:14+, Acts 10:37-38+), exerting authority over those souls who were under the control of evil spirits. The **daimonizómenoi**, those violently possessed by demons, are distinguished from other sick folk in Matt. 4:24; Mark 1:32. A man who is "mad," in the modern sense of being out of his mind, is said to have a demon, this being an accusation against John the Baptist (Matt. 11:18) and Christ (John 10:20). **MacArthur** points out that "Although its accounts of demonized people reflect many different conditions and degrees of control, Scripture does not clearly distinguish between being possessed, obsessed, or oppressed by demons. Demonization may be defined as a condition in which one or more demons inhabits and gains control over a human being. Demons can attack men spiritually, mentally, and physically. In the spiritual realm they promote false religions, demon worship, the occult, and innumerable kinds of immorality, including murder (Rev. 9:20–21; 18:23–24). In the intellectual and psychological realm they promote such things as false doctrines; insanity and masochism, as in this demon-possessed man, who gashed himself with stones (Mark 5:5); and inability to speak and suicidal mania (see Mark 9:17–22)....It is significant that Jesus never blamed a person for being either diseased or demon controlled. He recognized them as victims of powers beyond their own control and as in need of deliverance, not exhortation or condemnation." (MNTC-Mt)

## Related Resources

- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Demon; Demonic; Demonology](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Daemon](#)
- Baker Evangelical Dictionary [Demon](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Demon](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Demon](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Demon Possession Possession, Demon](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Demon](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Demon](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Demon](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopaedia [Demon](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Demon](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [How do we distinguish a psychological disorder from demon possession?](#)
- [John MacArthur's summary of four ways Scripture describes demon possession](#)
- [Is there activity of demonic spirits in the world today](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demonic oppression?](#)
- [Are demons fallen angels?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about demons?](#)
- [Do demons exist?](#)
- [What does Satan look like? What do demons look like?](#)
- [Can demons attach themselves to non-living/inanimate objects?](#)
- [If angels and demons can't die, what is the point of their engaging in battle?](#)
- [How are idols connected to demons \(Deuteronomy 32:16-17\)?](#)
- [Are the demons the disembodied spirits of the Nephilim?](#)
- [Questions about Angels & Demons](#)
- [Why did Jesus allow the demons to enter the herd of pigs?](#)
- [What are unclean spirits? Are unclean spirits demons?](#)
- [Is Satan the master of hell? Do Satan and his demons punish people in hell?](#)
- [Why did God allow Satan and the demons to sin?](#)
- [Why is "the devil made me do it" not a valid excuse?](#)
- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?](#)
- [How are Catholics able to perform exorcisms if many of their beliefs are unbiblical?](#)

**Answer:** Seventeen verses in the New Testament describe Jesus as the “son of David.” But the question arises, how could Jesus be the son of David if David lived approximately 1,000 years before Jesus? The answer is that Christ (the Messiah) was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David (2 Samuel 7:12–16). Jesus is the promised Messiah, which means He had to be of the lineage of David. Matthew 1 gives the genealogical proof that Jesus, in His humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph, Jesus’ legal father. The genealogy in Luke 3 traces Jesus’ lineage through His mother, Mary. Jesus is a descendant of David by adoption through Joseph and by blood through Mary. “As to his earthly life [Christ Jesus] was a descendant of David” (Romans 1:3).

Primarily, the title “Son of David” is more than a statement of physical genealogy. It is a Messianic title. When people referred to Jesus as the Son of David, they meant that He was the long-awaited Deliverer, the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies.

Jesus was addressed as “Lord, thou son of David” several times by people who, by faith, were seeking mercy or healing. The woman whose daughter was being tormented by a demon (Matthew 15:22) and the two blind men by the wayside (Matthew 20:30) all cried out to the Son of David for help. The titles of honor they gave Him declared their faith in Him. Calling Him “Lord” expressed their sense of His deity, dominion, and power, and calling Him “Son of David,” expressed their faith that He was the Messiah.

The Pharisees understood exactly what the people meant when they called Jesus “Son of David.” But, unlike those who cried out in faith, the Pharisees were so blinded by their own pride that they couldn’t see what the blind beggars could see—that here was the Messiah they had supposedly been waiting for all their lives. They hated Jesus because He wouldn’t give them the honor they thought they deserved, so when they heard the people hailing Jesus as the Savior, they became enraged (Matthew 21:15) and plotted to destroy Him (Luke 19:47).

Jesus further confounded the scribes and Pharisees by asking them to explain the meaning of this very title: how could it be that the Messiah is the son of David when David himself refers to Him as “my Lord” (Mark 12:35–37; cf. Psalm 110:1)? The teachers of the Law couldn’t answer the question. Jesus thereby exposed the Jewish leaders’ ineptitude as teachers and their ignorance of what the Old Testament taught as to the true nature of the Messiah, further alienating them from Him.

Jesus’ point in asking the question of Mark 12:35 was that the Messiah is more than the physical son of David. If He is David’s Lord, He must be greater than David. As Jesus says in Revelation 22:16, “I am the Root and the Offspring of David.” That is, He is both the Creator of David and the Descendant of David. Only the Son of God made flesh could say that. (Source - [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

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### **Developing Mega-Faith By Ed Dobson**

Scripture: Mark 7:24–30+, especially verses 27–29. See also Matthew 15:21–28:

Introduction: In this story Jesus left the Jewish area of Galilee for the seaport of Tyre, a pagan Gentile area. This was a very un-Jewish and un-rabbinical thing to do, but He knew there was a desperate mother there. Notice the verbs describing her: she heard about Him, came, fell at his feet, and begged His help. Yet Jesus answered her not a word. Her response to His non-response was to keep crying for mercy. Desperate people do desperate things. When you’re desperate you don’t care what people think, nor do you give up easily. Jesus finally said, in summary, “I’ve been sent to the lost sheep of Israel. My mission is the Jews. Why take the food of children and give it to dogs?” The word dog would be better translated, little dog or puppy. “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their puppy.” Jesus was not being unkind, but making a theological point—His first priority was the Jewish people. “Yes, Lord,” the woman replied, “but even the puppies under the table get some crumbs.” In other words, “What you’re saying is true, but I don’t need the full meal. Just a few crumbs will be sufficient.” Can you sense this woman’s faith? Jesus did. “Woman,” He said, “you have great faith!” The Greek word is μέγας (meg´-as), source of the English prefix mega. This woman had mega-faith! From this story, notice the characteristics of mega-faith:

1. Mega-faith does not deny the problem. It is not the power of positive thinking or a way of looking at life through rose-colored glasses. Mega-faith is realistic, acknowledging the challenges, difficulties, struggles, and sufferings.
2. Mega-faith goes directly to the source of blessing. As soon as she heard of Christ, she came and fell at His feet. We sometimes depend too much on our own abilities and resources. But great faith knows that beyond our own resources is the source of all power and blessing—God Himself! (See Heb. 4:14–16+)
3. Mega-faith throws itself at the feet of Jesus. This was an act of submission, carrying the idea of abandonment to the purpose, plan, and power of God. She didn’t come with her own plan and ask Jesus to bless it. She said, “Lord, I give this to You.” It’s frightening to give up control, but when we yield control to Christ, what freedom comes!
4. Mega-faith is persistent. At first, Jesus doesn’t answer this woman; and when He finally did answer her, His tone was discouraging. But she kept begging. We should always pray and not faint. Prayer and faith persist, even when God seems to respond not a word.
5. Mega-faith repeats the word of God. This woman took what Jesus said, repeated it back to Him, then added a request to it.

Great faith is anchored in Scripture.

6. Mega-faith responds with submission. "Yes, Lord," the woman said. Those are two very important words in our prayer vocabulary. They acknowledge Him who is in charge, like Jesus in the Garden, ". . . not my will, but Your will be done." Great faith surrenders the outcome to God, Who knows what is best for us.
7. Mega-faith is always rewarded. Going home, this woman found her child whole and the demon gone. Great faith is always rewarded with divine intervention which comes either through a miracle or through a specific message from God that enables us on the journey.

**Conclusion:** Maybe you're thinking, "That's easy for you to preach, but you don't know what I'm facing this morning." The beauty of this story is that it was not the faith of the demon-possessed girl that brought healing, it was the faith of her loving mother. If you can't muster mega-faith, learn to trust in the faith of those around you. God honors their faith on your behalf. Never underestimate the prayers and faith of others in your behalf. God, grant us great faith. Amen!

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### James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE WOMAN OF CANAAN Matthew 15:22-28

Jesus had said, "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out" (Matt. 11:28); but difficulties have often to be faced and surmounted in the coming.

#### I. Her Character. With regard to her nationality, she was—

1. A WOMAN OF CANAAN. A representative of a class that were without hope, having no promise, and without God in the world (Eph. 2:12). Such were some of us.
2. A WOMAN IN DEEP ANXIETY, "Her daughter was vexed with a devil" (v. 22). Her own soul was thereby grievously vexed. Her great need and conscious helplessness drove her to Jesus. Blessed thirst that draws us to such a fountain. Our poverty, like the prodigal's, is often the means of driving us home to the house of plenty.

#### II. Her Request. Such soul-agony must cry out. It was—

1. A CRY FOR MERCY. "Have mercy on me" (v. 22). The prayer will always be short when mercy is felt to be the first need. Secure His mercy and you have lifted the sluice for the outflowing of infinite blessing. If mercy is your first plea it will not be your last.
2. A CRY TO THE LORD. "Have mercy on me, O Lord" (v. 22). "To whom can we go but unto Thee? Thou hast the words of eternal life." Mother Nature is deaf to the cry of the needy.

#### III. Her Difficulties. The first trial she met with was—

1. THE SILENCE OF JESUS. "He answered her not a word" (v. 23). Does it not seem alarmingly strange that Jesus should hold His peace at such a time? There is a needs be. We must not deal with Jesus as one would do in trying an experiment. The silence of the Saviour may lead to deeper searchings of heart. Although He gives no word we may still hope in His character. Other difficulties were—
2. THE CONDUCT OF THE DISCIPLES. "They said, Send her away" (v. 23). Between the silence of Jesus and the surliness of His followers her faith would be severely tested. The conduct of many of Christ's disciples is more likely to drive away than attract to the Master; their words and actions are sad representations of His gracious character. Are we commending Him by showing love for the perishing?
3. HER OWN UNWORTHINESS. "Jesus said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (v. 24). She did not belong to the house of Israel; therefore as a heathen Gentile she had no claim on Him as the Son of David. She was knocking at a closed door. If as sinners we would buy from Him, we must buy without money. "Nothing in my hand I bring."
4. THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD. "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs" (v. 26). Deep ploughing this; yes, but the shafts are in the hands of Infinite Love. The promises given only to saints will not be cast to sinners. God cannot be unrighteous, even in saving a soul. She was not a Jewish child; therefore by birth she had no hope. In Christ we meet with a just God and a Saviour.

#### IV Her Argument. "Truth, Lord; yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall" (v. 27). As much as to say, "That's the truth, but as LORD Thou canst give me also what I need." This was a powerful plea, because it was—

1. THE ARGUMENT OF FAITH. "O woman, great is thy faith" (v. 28). She laid fast hold upon His character, not as Son of David, but as the Son of God—as Lord over all, blessed for ever. It was also—
2. THE ARGUMENT OF A BROKEN SPIRIT. She humbly took her place among the undeserving dogs, that the grace of the Lord might reach even to her. Grace delights to flow down and fill the needy. A broken and a

contrite spirit He will not despise.

V. Her Success. Hers was the triumph of faith.

1. SHE GAINED THE NEEDED BLESSING. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt" (v. 28). Her "Lord help me" is answered by His offer of Omnipotent fullness. Faith may be tested, but it will not be disappointed. Though He tarry, wait. She knew His Name, and trusted in Him, and He did not forsake her (Psa 9:10).

2. SHE EMBRACED A PASSING PRIVILEGE. While Jesus was passing by she "came out and cried" (v. 22). This was her only opportunity, and she made the most of it. Take heed lest you are letting yours slip. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2).

**Matthew 15:23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, 'Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us.'**

NET Matthew 15:23 But he did not answer her a word. Then his disciples came and begged him, "Send her away, because she keeps on crying out after us."

NLT Matthew 15:23 But Jesus gave her no reply, not even a word. Then his disciples urged him to send her away. "Tell her to go away," they said. "She is bothering us with all her begging."

ESV Matthew 15:23 But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us."

NIV Matthew 15:23 Jesus did not answer a word. So his disciples came to him and urged him, "Send her away, for she keeps crying out after us."

GNT Matthew 15:23 ὁ κ πεκρθη ατ λγον. κα προσελθ ντες ο μαθητα ατο ρ τουν ατ ν λγοντες, π λυσον ατ ν, τι κρ ζει πισθεν μ ν.

KJV Matthew 15:23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

- Ge 42:7 De 8:2 Ps 28:1 La 3:8
- **Send**: Mt 14:15 Mk 10:47,48
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## SHE'S SHOUTING AT US

Really? At "us?" Not really! At Jesus! No she never cried after them...only after her Master. (Brian Bell)

**But** - Term of contrast. This contrast is especially striking for she is crying loudly but Jesus is remaining silent!

**He did not answer her a word** - (See Spurgeon devotional below) - Jesus was not being rude. He was testing her and was stretching her faith, and she proved up to the test.

**THOUGHT** - His reason for not answering appears below. The effect was to develop, strengthen, and manifest her faith (comp. on 9:28). It is often so now; if with hearty confidence in the Lord's wisdom and mercy we continue to ask, we shall at last receive whatever he sees best for us, and besides may be improved in piety by the delay. The hearer of prayer is not less designing our good when he withholds or defers than when he "hears while we are yet speaking." (Broadus)

Brian Bell - Her faith pushes on despite His closed ear & closed mouth. Now contrast that w/individuals today who say, unless I hear God I will not believe. She shows incredible Job like faith, which didn't just say, though he smite me...but instead, though He slay me...yet will I trust him.

**Spurgeon** - "As Augustine says, 'The Word spoke not a word,' and that was so unlike him. He who was always so ready with responses to the cry of grief had no response for her." "His reticence drew a more energetic and faith-filled response from the Gentile woman." (Guzik)

**Phillips** - He said nothing, but He bathed His soul in her expression of faith, which was so different from the critical unbelief of the

rulers of His own people.

**And His disciples ([mathetes](#)) came** - They approached Jesus after she had begun pleading with Him to heal her daughter. They are dumb to the fact that this Gentile woman is manifesting a greater faith than the majority of Jesus' fellow Jews had manifested!

**MacArthur** explains that "The barriers He erected were not designed to push her away but to showcase the authenticity of her faith. Unlike the rich young ruler, whose faith crumbled when tested (cf. Matt. 19:16–22), this woman's faith was unbreakable. That the Lord had compassion on her is borne out by the rest of this account (cf. John 6:37)." (MNTC-Mk)

**And implored Him - Implored** is [erotao](#) in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating they asked Jesus several times. " This phrase is left out in Mark because he was writing to Gentiles who would not have understood the disciples' reluctance in helping a Gentile." (Utley)

**Saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us - Send** is [apolo](#) in the [aorist imperative](#) a command to Jesus. As Broadus explains "Some have thought they wished him simply to order her off, as troublesome and likely to attract to them the attention of others. But they had never seen him dismiss a suppliant in any other way than by doing what was asked; and that they desired him to grant her request is made plain by his answer, which is a reason why he should not grant it. Observe that this was an answer to the disciples, and not addressed to the woman. It is not clear that she heard it; for the statement in v. 25, 'came and worshipped him,' implies that she had been following at some little distance, as does also the loud crying of Mt 15:22 f."

**Guzik** has an interesting thought - It is likely that the disciples meant, "Send her away by giving her what she wants." It is entirely possible that they just wanted her to go away, and the easiest way was for Jesus to fix her problem. (He adds that R T France says) "The same verb in Luke 2:29+ applies to a dismissal with desire satisfied."

**Wiersbe** - We are not sure whether they meant, "Give her what she wants and get rid of her" or just "Get rid of her!" In either case, they were not showing much compassion for either her or her demonized daughter. Our Lord's reply in Matthew 15:24 indicates that they probably wanted Him to answer her request.

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**Spurgeon** - "But he answered her not a word." —Matthew 15:23

Genuine seekers who as yet have not obtained the blessing, may take comfort from the story before us. The Saviour did not at once bestow the blessing, even though the woman had great faith in him. He intended to give it, but he waited awhile. "He answered her not a word." Were not her prayers good? Never better in the world. Was not her case needy? Sorrowfully needy. Did she not feel her need sufficiently? She felt it overwhelmingly. Was she not earnest enough? She was intensely so. Had she no faith? She had such a high degree of it that even Jesus wondered, and said, "O woman, great is thy faith." See then, although it is true that faith brings peace, yet it does not always bring it instantaneously. There may be certain reasons calling for the trial of faith, rather than the reward of faith. Genuine faith may be in the soul like a hidden seed, but as yet it may not have budded and blossomed into joy and peace. A painful silence from the Saviour is the grievous trial of many a seeking soul, but heavier still is the affliction of a harsh cutting reply such as this, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." Many in waiting upon the Lord find immediate delight, but this is not the case with all. Some, like the jailer, are in a moment turned from darkness to light, but others are plants of slower growth. A deeper sense of sin may be given to you instead of a sense of pardon, and in such a case you will have need of patience to bear the heavy blow. Ah! poor heart, though Christ beat and bruise thee, or even slay thee, trust him; though he should give thee an angry word, believe in the love of his heart. Do not, I beseech thee, give up seeking or trusting my Master, because thou hast not yet obtained the conscious joy which thou longest for. Cast thyself on him, and perseveringly depend even where thou canst not rejoicingly hope.

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**J C Ryle** - We see, in the first place, that true faith may sometimes be found, where it might have been least expected.

A Caananitish woman cries to our Lord for help, on behalf of her daughter. "Have mercy on me," she says, "O Lord, thou Son of David." Such a prayer would have showed great faith, had she lived in Bethany, or Jerusalem. But when we find that she came from the "coasts of Tyre and Sidon," such a prayer may well fill us with surprise. It ought to teach us, that it is grace, not place, which makes people believers. We may live in a prophet's family, like Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, and yet continue impenitent, unbelieving, and fond of the world. We may dwell in the midst of superstition and dark idolatry, like the little maid in Naaman's house, and yet be faithful witnesses for God and His Christ. Let us not despair of any one's soul, merely because his lot is cast in an unfavorable position. It is possible to dwell in the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, and yet sit down in the kingdom of God.

We see, in the second place, that affliction sometimes proves a blessing to a person's soul.

This Caananitish mother no doubt had been sorely tried. She had seen her darling child vexed with a devil, and been unable to relieve her. But yet that trouble brought her to Christ, and taught her to pray. Without it she might have lived and died in careless ignorance, and never seen Jesus at all. Surely it was good for her that she was afflicted. (Psalm 119:71.)

Let us mark this well. There is nothing which shows our ignorance so much as our impatience under trouble. We forget that every cross is a message from God, and intended to do us good in the end. Trials are intended to make us think,—to wean us from the world,—to send us to the Bible,—to drive us to our knees. Health is a good thing; but sickness is far better, if it leads us to God. Prosperity is a great mercy, but adversity is a greater one, if it brings us to Christ. Anything, anything is better than living in carelessness, and dying in sin. Better a thousand times be afflicted, like the Canaanitish mother, and like her flee to Christ, than live at ease, like the rich “fool,” and die at last without Christ and without hope. (Luke 12:20.)

We see, in the third place, that Christ’s people are often less gracious and compassionate than Christ Himself.

The woman about whom we are reading, found small favor with our Lord’s disciples. Perhaps they regarded an inhabitant of the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, as unworthy of their Master’s help. At any rate they said, “Send her away.”

There is only too much of this spirit among many who profess and call themselves believers. They are apt to discourage inquirers after Christ, instead of helping them forward. They are too ready to doubt the reality of a beginner’s grace, because it is small, and to treat him as Saul was treated when he first came to Jerusalem after his conversion. “They believed not that he was a disciple.” (Acts 9:26.) Let us beware of giving way to this spirit. Let us seek to have more of the mind that was in Christ. Like Him let us be gentle, and kind, and encouraging in all our treatment of those who are seeking to be saved. Above all, let us tell men continually that they must not judge of Christ by Christians. Let us assure them that there is far more in that gracious Master, than there is in the best of His servants. Peter, and James, and John may say to the afflicted soul, “Send her away.” But such a word never came from the lips of Christ. He may sometimes keep us long waiting, as He did this woman. But He will never send us empty away.

We see, in the last place, what encouragement there is to persevere in prayer, both for ourselves and others.

It is hard to conceive a more striking illustration of this truth, than we have in this passage. The prayer of this afflicted mother at first seemed entirely unnoticed: Jesus “answered her not a word.” Yet she prayed on.—The saying which by and bye fell from our Lord’s lips sounded discouraging: “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Yet she prayed on, “Lord, help me.” The second saying of our Lord was even less encouraging than the first: “It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and cast it to the dogs.” Yet “hope deferred” did not “make her heart sick.” (Prov. 13:12.) Even then she was not silenced. Even then she finds a plea for some “crumbs” of mercy to be granted to her. And her importunity obtained at length a gracious reward. “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” That promise never yet was broken, “Seek and ye shall find. (Matt. 7:7.)

Let us remember this history, when we pray for ourselves. We are sometimes tempted to think that we get no good by our prayers, and that we may as well give them up altogether. Let us resist the temptation. It comes from the devil. Let us believe, and pray on. Against our besetting sins, against the spirit of the world, against the wiles of the devil, let us pray on, and not faint.—For strength to do duty, for grace to bear our trials, for comfort in every trouble, let us continue in prayer. Let us be sure that no time is so well-spent in every day, as that which we spend upon our knees. Jesus hears us, and in his own good time will give an answer.

Let us remember this history, when we intercede for others. Have we children, whose conversion we desire? Have we relations and friends, about whose salvation we are anxious? Let us follow the example of this Canaanitish woman, and lay the state of their souls before Christ. Let us name their names before Him night and day, and never rest till we have an answer. We may have to wait many a long year. We may seem to pray in vain, and intercede without profit. But let us never give up. Let us believe that Jesus is not changed, and that He who heard the Canaanitish mother, and granted her request, will also hear us, and one day give us an answer of peace.

**Matthew 15:24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."**

NET Matthew 15:24 So he answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

NLT Matthew 15:24 Then Jesus said to the woman, "I was sent only to help God's lost sheep-- the people of Israel."

ESV Matthew 15:24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

NIV Matthew 15:24 He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel."

GNT Matthew 15:24 ὁ ποκριθε ς ε πεν, Ο κ πεστ λην ε μ ε ς τ πρ βατα τ πολωλ τα ο κου σρα λ.

KJV Matthew 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

■ **I was sent:** Mt 9:36 10:5,6 Isa 53:6 Jer 50:6,7 Eze 34:5,6,16,23 Lu 15:4-6 Ac 3:25,26 13:46 Ro 15:8

- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOOD SHEPHERD SENT TO THE LOST SHEEP

**But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel- I was sent** refers to the sending of the Son by the Father (Mt 10:40, Mk 9:37, Lk 4:18, Lk 4:43)! "Jesus here and elsewhere speaks of himself as subordinate to the Father, with reference to his official position and work as the God-man, the Mediator (comp. on 11:27); this does not conflict with the idea that as the Eternal Son he is very God, and equal with the Father. (John 1:1; Rom. 9:5.)" (Broadus) As Mark explains "the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race." (Mk 7:26+) Notice Jesus' assessment of the spiritual condition of the Jews as **the lost sheep**.

**Broadus on lost sheep** - He doubtless healed Gentile sick when brought to him in the land of Israel (4:24 f.; 15:30 f.; certainly in 8:5 ff.); but now he had gone into a Gentile country, and must avoid entering upon a general ministry there. His ministry in Israel prepared the way for a blessing to the Gentiles. (Rom. 15:8–10.) When his work was finished, then the apostles would be his "witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." (Acts 1:8.) It would have conflicted with the nature and design of Christ's mission, had he anticipated this work of the apostles, though he alluded to it as a part of his own work. (John 10:16.) The Jewish mind required slow preparation (as the history in Acts plainly shows) for the idea that Gentiles were to share freely the benefits of the Messianic reign; and the Jews would have been irritated and utterly repelled (Lutteroth), if their Messiah had at once begun a great work among the Gentiles. Jesus was induced to make an exception to the rule by this woman's great faith and humble importunity, as the prophets had sometimes done. (Luke 4:25–27.) There is no objection to supposing him overcome by importunity. But, in fact, this was hardly an exception, for her great faith brought her in some sense within the limits of his mission. (Gal. 3:7.) Notice that v. 23 f. is found in Matt. only, who wrote especially for Jews, and desired to show that Jesus was the Messiah. Mark's Gentile readers would not at first have understood such a saying as v. 24, and would have been repelled by it.

**Wiersbe** - Keep in mind that our Lord responded to this woman as He did, not to destroy her faith, but to develop it. Her own replies showed that she was growing in faith and unwilling to let Him go without getting an answer. Godly Samuel Rutherford stated this principle perfectly: "It is faith's work to claim and challenge loving-kindness out of all the roughest strokes of God."

**Henry Morris on the lost sheep of the house of Israel** - The Lord Jesus had come into the world to die for the sin of the whole world, but He had also come as Israel's promised Messiah. His seeming harshness to the Canaanite woman is best understood as not only a test of her faith in the God of Israel, but also as a means to show His disciples that Gentiles also were included in God's plan, and that they too could have saving faith.

**Sent** (649)(**apostello** from **apo** = from, away from + **stello** = to withdraw from, avoid) means to send off, to send forth, to send out. To send out; to commission as a representative, an ambassador, an envoy. The idea is to send forth from one place to another. But the meaning of **apostello** is more than just to send because it means "to send off on a commission to do something as one's personal representative, with credentials furnished" (Wuest) To send upon some business (Mt. 2:16; 10:5; 20:2). To send away in the sense of to dismiss (Mk 12:3, 4). To send or thrust forth as a sickle among corn (Mk 4:29).

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**John Broadus on lost sheep** (comment on Mt 10:6) - To the lost sheep, etc., comp. on Mt 9:36; and see the same figure employed in Isa. 53:6; Jer. 50:6; Ezek. 34:5. Our Lord confined his own personal labors almost entirely to the Jews; he declares, in 15:24, that his mission was 'to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,' the same expression as here; though at a later period he says that he has 'other sheep which are not of this fold.' (John. 10:16.) It was a part of the peculiar privileges of the Jewish nation that the gospel should be first preached to them (Luke 24:47; Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:16); yet Jesus frequently intimated that these exclusive privileges could not last always. (Mt 8:11; 10:18; 21:43; 22:9; 24:14.) By Confining his labors and those of the Twelve to them he avoided exciting their prejudices, and thus deprived them of even the poor excuse for rejecting him which they would have found in his preaching freely among the Gentiles and Samaritans. Accordingly, Matthew mentions this limitation, while Mark and Luke do not. Even at a later period, Paul found it almost impossible to convince some Jewish Christians that the Gentiles were to be admitted to the privileges of the gospel, without becoming Jews. And then had the reign of Messiah been proclaimed to the Gentiles before it had been welcomed by many Jews, the former might have made it a very plausible objection to the new religion that it was not believed in at home, where it was best understood. Furthermore, as regards this mission of the Twelve, they were as yet too ignorant themselves of the true nature of Messiah's kingdom to undertake its propagation among the Gentiles; they would have introduced the current Jewish errors on the subject. Some years later, when their own course of early instruction was completed,



and the Spirit was come, they were prepared to preach “repentance and remission of sins ... unto all the nations.” (Luke 24:47) For the present they could prepare the Jews among whom they went for the preaching of Jesus, and what they said would not strengthen, but so far as it went would rather correct the popular errors. Such a restriction of labor to the Jews is not addressed to the Seventy (Luke 10:1ff.), but it is really involved in the statement that they were to go where Jesus was going.

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**Mormons Answered Verse by Verse** Matthew 15:24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

A footnote to this verse in the LDS Salt Lake City Bible ties in the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” with the “scattering” of Israel, representatives of the tribe of Joseph allegedly having migrated to the Americas. Book of Mormon verses in the Topical Guide section cited in this footnote tell of Jesus’ alleged visits to these Israelites in the Americas. But, is that what Jesus meant when he referred to “the lost sheep of the house of Israel”? No. Rather, he meant the Israelites to whom he was preaching in Judah and in Galilee who were in a “lost” condition in God’s eyes. This is clear from the way he used the same expression earlier in Matthew’s Gospel when he sent out his apostles into towns he himself was about to visit, instructing them, “Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matt. 10:5, 6). Obviously, he did not send them to the Americas.

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**Norman Geisler - When Cultists Ask** - MATTHEW 15:24—Did the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” mentioned in this verse migrate to America?

MISINTERPRETATION: Mormons believe the “lost sheep of the house of Israel” mentioned in this verse refers not to Israelites in the Palestine area but to Israelites who migrated to America (Smith, 1975, 3:214).

CORRECTING THE MISINTERPRETATION: The Mormon understanding is not supported either by the text or its context. Jesus was referring to Israelites that were spiritually lost, not geographically lost, more specifically, Israelites in the Palestine area who were in a lost condition in God’s eyes. Further, recall that Jesus had instructed the disciples: “Go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as you go, preach, saying, ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand’ ” (Matt. 10:6–7 NASB). Jesus’ disciples fulfilled these instructions not by going to America to preach, but by preaching to Israelites in and around Palestine.

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**Question - [Why did Jesus say that He was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel \(Matthew 15:24\)?](#)**

**Answer:** Jesus was in the area of Tyre and Sidon, a coastal region in extreme northeastern Galilee (Matthew 15:21) when a Canaanite woman came to Him with a request to heal her demon-possessed daughter. For a while, Jesus did not respond to the woman’s entreaties, and she followed Him and continued to beg for mercy. Finally, the disciples, feeling that the woman was a nuisance, asked Jesus to send her away. Then Jesus said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 15:24).

We should understand Jesus’ words here not as an outright rejection of the Gentiles—moments later, He heals the woman’s daughter (Matthew 15:28)—but as a fulfillment of prophecy, a setting of priorities, and a test of the woman’s faith.

In Jeremiah 50:6, God calls Israel His people and “lost sheep.” The Messiah, spoken of throughout the Old Testament, was seen as the one who would gather these “lost sheep” (Ezekiel 34:23-24; Micah 5:4-5). When Jesus presented Himself as a shepherd to Israel, He was claiming to be the fulfillment of Messianic prophecy (Mark 6:34, 14:27; John 10:11-16; see also Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 5:4; and Revelation 7:17).

Jesus’ words to the Canaanite woman also show an awareness of Israel’s place in God’s plan of salvation. God revealed through Moses that the children of Israel were “a holy people to the LORD . . . chosen . . . a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth” (Deuteronomy 7:6). It was through the Jews that God issued His Law, preserved His Word, and sent His Son. This is why, elsewhere, Jesus tells a Samaritan that “salvation is of the Jews” (John 4:22). In Matthew 15, when the Jewish Messiah says that He was sent to “the house of Israel,” He is simply connecting His presence with God’s purpose in Old Testament history. Christ was “born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law” (Galatians 4:4-5).

Every ministry must have priorities, and Christ’s ministry was no exception. When Jesus sent His disciples to preach the good news of the kingdom, He expressly told them, “Do not go into the way of the Gentiles, and do not enter a city of the Samaritans. But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel” (Matthew 10:5-6). Jesus did not forbid their preaching to all Gentiles; He did, however, narrow their focus to the areas which should be most receptive—those who knew the Law and were expecting the Messiah. Paul, in his missionary journeys, followed the same priority of preaching to the Jews first (Romans 1:16).

Finally, Jesus’ words to the Canaanite woman served as a test of her faith. She came to Jesus believing that He was the “Lord,” the

"Son of David," and the giver of mercy (Matthew 15:22). His delayed answer and seemingly exclusionary statement brought from her a further, passionate, public expression of her faith in His unlimited power (Matthew 15:27).

This act of compassion and healing of a Gentile is a beautiful picture of Christ's ministry to the whole world—the Jewish Messiah is also the Savior of all who will believe (Matthew 28:19; John 10:16; Acts 10:34-36; Revelation 5:9). (Source - [Gotquestions](#))

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D L Moody - Matthew 15:

The woman's faith overcame His—

1. Silence. Matthew 15:23.
2. Sovereignty. Matthew 15:24.
3. Severity. Matthew 15:26.

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#### Related Resource:

- [Did Jesus come only for the Jews and not the Gentiles?](#)

**Matthew 15:25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"**

NET Matthew 15:25 But she came and bowed down before him and said, "Lord, help me!"

NLT Matthew 15:25 But she came and worshiped him, pleading again, "Lord, help me!"

ESV Matthew 15:25 But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me."

NIV Matthew 15:25 The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.

GNT Matthew 15:25 ὁ ἄθεος προσεκνεῖσθαι ἡμεῖς, Κύριε, βοήθει μοι.

KJV Matthew 15:25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

- **came:** Mt 20:31 Ge 32:26 Ho 12:4 Lu 11:8-10 18:1-8
- **bow down before:** Mt 14:33
- **Lord:** Mk 9:22,24
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THE BEST PRAYER: HELP LORD

**But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!"** - She was not to be deterred, for she was a determined mother with a demonized daughter! Mark specified her request for help writing "she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter." (Mark 7:26+ ) Her cry for **help** is in [present imperative](#), a bold request! Note that she says "help me," not "help my daughter." She is intimately involved in the intercessory prayer, a good pattern for all intercessors, praying with "personal, possessive passion."

The brightest jewels are found in the darkest places.

**Brian Bell** - Press through all obstacles & throw yourself at His feet. Knowing that, the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. d) Slide9 Jesus was creating an opportunity for the complete activity of her faith.

**Spurgeon** - "I urge you who seek the conversion of others to follow her example. Notice, she did not pray, 'Lord, help my daughter;' but, 'Lord, help me.' I commend this prayer to you because it is such a handy prayer. You can use it when you are in a hurry, you can use it when you are in a fright, you can use it when you have not time to bow your knee. You can use it in the pulpit if you are going to preach, you can use it when you are opening your shop, you can use it when you are rising in the morning. It is such a handy prayer that I hardly know any position in which you could not pray it: 'Lord, help me.'

**Constable** - This woman's desperate feeling of helplessness and her confidence in Jesus' ability to meet her need are obvious in her posture and her words. Matthew used the imperfect tense to describe her kneeling to make her action even more vivid. She did not just kneel, but she was kneeling. This was the attitude of a humble suppliant.

**Bow down** (**imperfect tense** = "not only states that she did this, but describes her as so doing" - Broadus) (4352)(**proskuneo** from **pros** = before + **kuneo** = kiss or adore) means to prostrate oneself in homage before another in the full sense of worship, not mere reverence or courtesy. When Jesus Christ was born into this world, He was attended and worshipped by angels. (Lu 2:13f). **Proskuneo** represents the most common Near Eastern act of adoration and reverence and also carries the idea of profound awe and respect. Some believe that the root word **kuneo** may be related to **kuon** which is the Greek word for dog and which then could be picturing a dog licking his master's hand.

**Help** (997)(**boetheo** from **boe** = a cry, exclamation + **théo** = to run) means to run on hearing a cry, to give assistance (especially to those in danger) or meet an urgent distress call. To supply urgently needed help. To render assistance to someone in need, furnish aid. **TDNT** adds it means "to hasten to the help of the oppressed," and then "to help." **Boetheo** is often used of the physician, e.g., Plut. Alex., 19 (I, 674e); Epict. Diss., II, 15, 15: νοσω , κύρλε, βοήθησόν μοι; and cf. also the healings of Jesus (Mk. 9:22, 24; Mt. 15:25). Similarly in Ac. 16:9; Rev. 12:16. Of God as the One who helps it is used only at 2 Cor. 6:2, quoting Isa. 49:8. It is used of help in religious need at Mk. 9:24; Heb. 2:18. **Boethéo** means to **succor** (KJV reads "He is able to **succor** them that are tempted") which is a word you may not be too familiar with, but which means literally to run to or run to support hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to **succor** a besieged city; to **succor** prisoners. (**succor** is derived from Latin succurrere = to run up, run to help, from **sub-** = up + **curre** to run).

**MARCUS RAINSFORD Lord, help me.** - There is a chain of but three links in this prayer of the poor woman of Canaan, but it reaches a long way. Some of the most beautiful prayers ever uttered are very short prayers. This is a very short prayer—any child can say it. There are three links in the chain, mark you. One link is on the throne of God; it is "Lord." The other link is down here; it is "me." And then there is a great link between that and this; it is "help." "Lord, help me." And the greater your need, the more that middle link in the chain will express.

**D L Moody** - Christ heard the woman when she dropped the title, "Son of David" (v. 22). She was a Gentile. A prayer of three links, connecting earth with heaven: "LORD—HELP—ME."

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#### **James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - Scripture Couplets SALVATION BEFORE HELP.**

"Lord, save me" (Matt. 14:30).

"Lord, help me" (Matt. 15:25).

Two important, earnest, and impressive prayers. But please observe their order in the sacred narrative. Peter's cry, "Lord, save me," comes before the Syro-Phoenician's plea, "Lord, help me." Before the request for his assistance comes the call for his salvation. This is highly significant, and conveys a much needed and vitally important lesson.

"But I do ask God to help me," is often the reply of men and women when dealt with about their souls. There is hardly a Christian worker but has heard this statement many a time. And one cannot but feel that self-righteousness prompts that reply. No doubt it is true, for instinctively the most careless and depraved cry out for the help of the Almighty in times of distress and disaster. But it is not according to the Divine order. I must cry, "Lord, save me," before I cry, "Lord, help me." Before I have any right to ask for His assistance I must ask for His salvation. In fact, I have no claim on His willingness to help unless I have received His grace and mercy. This order is recognised in other portions of the Holy Book. For instance, the Gibeonites in a time of sore and desperate need sent an urgent message to Joshua, saying, "Save us and help us." (Joshua 10:6); and the saint in the grand old 46th Psalm boldly exclaims: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." Note the order—"save" then "help"; a "refuge," then a "present help"—yea, "a very present help."

It is all very well to say: "I do ask God to help me," but is that prayer answered? Ah, that is another thing. The heart-moving plea of the woman of Canaan in Matthew 15 was unheeded by the Saviour; yea, though the disciples begged Him to grant it in order to get rid of her (for undoubtedly that is the full significance of their conduct as indicated in verse 23). And it was all because she had not recognised and observed the Divine order. She had, as a matter of fact, taken up an entirely false position, making a claim on Jesus as the "Son of David," a title she as a Gentile had no right to plead. It was only when she had taken her rightful place at His feet that her request for His help was granted. Oh, the blessedness of lying low at His feet in penitence and confession! Then, having become my Divine refuge from sin, He becomes my daily helper and strengthener. Having cried, Lord, save me," I have a humble right to cry daily, "Lord, help me."

**I. "Lord, save me"**—It was the Prayer of Sinking Peter for Himself, after attempting to do as Jesus did. Impetuous Peter asked the Lord for His invitation, and the Son of God could not do otherwise than invite him. And for a moment or two all seemed well. Peter,

too, began to do the impossible, as all who trust the Saviour accomplish; but taking his eyes off the Master, he began to sink, and cried, "Lord, save me." This was a perfect prayer. It was short, direct, definite, earnest, and received an immediate reply. It does not take the Lord long to save us. Let the cry of penitence rise from a broken and a contrite heart and immediately He saves. Oh, sinking, soul, why do you not cry out to Him?

**II. "Lord, help me."** It was the Prayer of One for Another, the clamorous cry of a mother for her child, the expression of a desperate need that would not take "No" for an answer, the request of one prepared to take any lowly position provided she could secure the boon she coveted. And that prayer, too, was ultimately granted. What else could the Lord do? The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. What a rebuke this mother's desperate plea is to many of our prayers for others! We will stir ourselves up, and lay hold on God, and then He will not deny the help we crave.

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**P G Matthew** - The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said. —Matthew 15:25

What does authentic, saving faith look like? In Matthew 15, the Canaanite woman gives us a beautiful portrait. She came through the trial of her faith successfully. No one could get her to stop asking Jesus for help. She kept on crying out and worshiping. Despite the initial "No," she believed Jesus would help her. First, then, faith's mouth cannot be stopped; it ever cries out to the Lord.

Second, authentic faith agrees with the word of God that says we are sinners dead in trespasses and sin. In other words, it wholeheartedly embraces the declaration that we are dogs, Canaanites, unrighteous, filthy, lost, miserable, and wretched. Real faith says, "That's exactly right. That's a description of me." Those who are pretenders will be offended, get angry, and go away.

If we will not acknowledge that we are totally lost and depraved sinners in our minds, emotions, and wills, then Jesus cannot help us. Why? He is in the business of raising only the dead. He saves only sinners. The man who proudly clothes himself with his own righteousness will never receive any blessing from Jesus Christ.

Third, faith argues and reasons. But we must make sure our arguments are biblically sound. In Mark 7, we learn that Jesus had said to the woman, "The children must first be fed." And this woman reasoned by faith that "first" means there will be a second. Jesus did not say, "I will never help you." There was hope.

The woman agreed that she was a dog, but pointed out that even a dog must be fed. And she must have noticed that Jesus did not use the Greek word for wild dogs, but the word for pet dogs who lived in the house and played with the children. While their owners ate their meal, these pet dogs were allowed to lick up what was spilled under the table.

So she said in all humility, "I don't need a whole loaf. All I need is a crumb." A crumb from the hand of Christ is more than sufficient to meet our every need. Yet he never gives us just a crumb. In response to our living, saving faith, he gives us himself. This woman had such faith, and Jesus healed her daughter.

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**Oswald Chambers** - IN THE DAYS OF HIS flesh, our Lord worked nearly exclusively with Jews. But occasionally a Gentile burst through the crowd; and when that happened, Jesus Christ dealt with that person in a totally different manner. In every case of our Lord's dealings with a religious Jew, there is a sort of serious solemnity about the Jew and about our Lord. But when He came in contact with a Greek, He seems to embrace the sharp wit of the Greek and deals with that person accordingly.

The account of the Syrophenician woman in Matthew 15 is a good example. As the incident begins, the Lord wanted to be alone. He had a lot of publicity, and He was trying to get His disciples away when this Gentile woman burst through the crowd with a request. Jesus paid no attention to her. The reason was quite obvious—He wanted to be quiet.

Watch how our Lord dealt with her. He gave her a proverb and she gave Him a proverb back: "It is not meet to fling the meat to very little dogs." The woman replied, "But it is quite legitimate for the dogs to catch the crumbs that fall from the master's table."

We Christian workers wonder how we are to get these irreligious, yet healthy-minded people to the place where they will want Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Many people seem to be happy without Him. They are moral and upright. But our Lord describes them as lost.

**Matthew 15:26** And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

NET Matthew 15:26 "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs," he said.

NLT Matthew 15:26 Jesus responded, "It isn't right to take food from the children and throw it to the dogs."

ESV Matthew 15:26 And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."

NIV Matthew 15:26 He replied, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

GNT Matthew 15:26 ὁ ποκριθε ς ε πεν, Ο κ στιν καλ ν λαβε ν τ ν ρτον τ ν τ κνων κα βαλε ν το ς κυαρ οις.

KJV Matthew 15:26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

- **It is not:** Mt 7:6 Mk 7:27,28 Ac 22:21,22 Ro 9:4 Ga 2:15 Eph 2:12 Php 3:2 Rev 22:15
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 7:27+ And He was saying to her, "Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she answered and \*said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." 29 And He said to her, "Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter." 30 And going back to her home, she found the child lying on the bed, the demon having left.

### JESUS' THIRD "NEGATIVE" REPLY

The first of course was no response in Mt 15:23, the second in Mt 15:24 and the third here. And yet she did not give up. As someone has said...

Triumph is just *umph* added to *try*!

Samuel Rutherford (the saintly Scottish minister) who suffered greatly for Christ, once wrote to a friend, It is faith's work to claim and challenge lovingkindness out of all the roughest strokes of God." And that's what this woman did. (Brian Bell)

**And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs-** Mark 7:27+ begins "And He was saying to her, "**Let the children be satisfied first.**" If you literally take the children's bread and throw to the dogs, the children will go physically hungry. And yet this is almost a parabolic statement, for Jesus uses "**children**" to speak of the Jews. And while not specifically stated, the "**bread**" could easily be viewed as a veiled reference to Himself as the "Bread of Life." (Jn 6:35, 48+) He was to go first to "feed" the Jews the **Gospel of Jesus Christ** (Mk 1:1+), but sadly "He came to His own (JEWS ~ "THE CHILDREN"), and those who were His own did not receive (BUT IN FACT LARGELY REJECTED) Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God (JEWS AND GENTILES NOW IN ONE FAMILY), even to those who believe in His name, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God (Jn 3:3-7+). (Jn 1:11-13+)

**Brian Bell** - Does this bristle you the way Jesus treats her? Let it. - But what 1st appears to be rudeness...let's remember His delays are not His denials.

**Broadus** - Jesus puts before her the same idea he had just stated to the disciples, that the Messianic benefits were designed for the Jews, and purposely employs harsh expressions which will develop her faith and humility. He had produced a similar effect in the centurion by an opposite course. (Mt 8:7.)

**Wiersbe** - Jesus was not playing games with the woman, nor was He trying to make the situation more difficult. He was drawing out of her a growing response of faith.

**Wuest** makes a great point about Jesus going first to the Jews - The Jews looked upon all Gentiles as dogs. It was a term of reproach. Paul called the Judaizers, dogs when he said (Phil. 3:2+), "Beware of the dogs." But our Lord did not use the Greek word **kuōn** here, the term for a dog. And He must have spoken Greek to this woman, for she would not know the Aramaic of the Jews. Greek was the international language of the day. The word Jesus used was *kunarium* "a little dog." In answering the woman thus, He was just staying by His commission, to the Jew first, and then to the Gentile. And that order of procedure was not favoritism, but only the method of reaching the large number through a selected smaller group. The Jew was the chosen channel through which God has elected to reach the Gentiles. It would be just a wise efficiency to thus go to the Jew first. The Messiah, sent to Israel, was careful to preserve that order. And even when about to minister to a Gentile to whom His compassionate heart went out, He was careful to remind her of the fact that she came second, not first, in the great program of God.

**Dogs** (2952)(*kunarium*) is the term for a little dog or puppy or what we might refer to as a "house dog." TDNT makes an interesting comment that "is probably chosen by Jesus in Mk. 7:27; Mt. 25:26 to show that there is a

distinction between Jews and Gentiles but still to give the Gentiles a place in the house. The woman in her reply accepts the distinction but in so doing takes the place that is offered and finds the help she seeks." In sum, Jesus is not talking about a street scavenger but a household pet. Used 4x - Matt. 15:26; Matt. 15:27; Mk. 7:27; Mk. 7:28. No uses in the Septuagint.

**Wuest** - He uses the illustration of the children of the household at the table, and their little pets under the table. It is seemly, proper, (kalon (καλον)), He says, to see that the children are fed first, then the little dogs, their pets.

**Chuck Smith** on **dogs** - wild scavenger dogs that were hated by everybody. They would run in packs; they would attack sheep, they would attack children. And they were ferocious, vicious, hated animals. And it was very common for the Jews to call the Gentile dogs. And the word is equivalent to our English word bitch where it is a derogatory term. And so, they would use it, the word dog like a person would use the other word today, in a very derisive, derogatory way....There is another Greek word for dog, which is the word that Jesus used. It is that little household pet that's always under the table, that little pet of the family. And most of the Jewish homes had their little pet dogs, which were domesticated and lovable little animals under the table.

**Henry Morris** The "**dogs**" under the table (Mark 7:28) were understood to be small household pets. On the reasons for the seeming harshness of Jesus' reply to this Gentile woman, note that the Lord Jesus had come into the world to die for the sin of the whole world, but He had also come as Israel's promised Messiah. His seeming harshness to the Canaanite woman is best understood as not only a test of her faith in the God of Israel, but also as a means to show His disciples that Gentiles also were included in God's plan, and that they too could have saving faith.

**Utley** - This is the only use of this term in the NT. Its harshness is diminished by the fact that it is DIMINUTIVE in form, "puppies" (JB, "house-dogs"). The Jews called the Gentiles "dogs." This dialogue was intended to help the disciples overcome their prejudice against Gentiles. Jesus recognized and publicly affirmed that her faith was great!

**Believer's Study Bible** - Jesus was neither indifferent nor insensitive in His reply to the Syro-Phoenician woman. His approach is designed to test her faith and to demonstrate the extent of her faith to the disciples. The "little dogs" refer to small dogs which were kept as house pets. The parallel passage in Matt. 15:21-28 indicates that Jesus meant that His ministry was first taken to Israel and then subsequently to the Gentiles (cf. Acts 13:46; Rom. 1:16). This woman, while recognizing this, demonstrated great faith. As a result, Jesus honored her request. Believers today can rejoice because in the church there are no racial distinctions (cf. Gal. 3:28; Eph. 2:11-22; Col. 3:11).

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**Saphir** - "Truth, Lord: yet!" is the sum and substance of faith. If we have learned to combine these words, we have learned to believe. Truth, Lord: "sin has abounded unto death"; yet "hath Thy grace much more abounded unto life." Truth, Lord: "cursed is every one that abideth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them"; yet, "He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Truth, Lord, is the sea of our sin and guilt, and the righteous anger of God; yet, is the rock of Christ's redemption and love. Truth, Lord, is a view of self; yet, is a view of Jesus.

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#### **Question - [Why did Jesus call the Canaanite woman a dog?](#)**

**Answer:** In Matthew 15:21–28, Jesus encounters a Canaanite (Syrophenician) woman who begs Him to cure her daughter. Jesus initially refuses her request by saying, "It is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to the dogs" (Matthew 15:26). Taken out of context, and especially in English, it's easy to mistake this for an insult. In the flow of the story, however, it's clear Jesus is creating a metaphor meant to explain the priorities of His ministry. He is also teaching an important lesson to His disciples.

Jews in Jesus' day sometimes referred to Gentiles as "dogs." In Greek, this word is kuon, meaning "wild cur" (Matthew 7:6; Luke 16:21; Philippians 3:2). Non-Jews were considered so unspiritual that even being in their presence could make a person ceremonially unclean (John 18:28). Much of Jesus' ministry, however, involved turning expectations and prejudices on their heads (Matthew 11:19; John 4:9–10). According to Matthew's narrative, Jesus left Israel and went into Tyre and Sidon, which was Gentile territory (Matthew 15:21). When the Canaanite woman approached and repeatedly asked for healing, the disciples were annoyed and asked Jesus to send her away (Matthew 15:23).

At this point, Jesus explained His current ministry in a way that both the woman and the watching disciples could understand. At that time, His duty was to the people of Israel, not to the Gentiles (Matthew 15:24). Recklessly taking His attention from Israel, in violation of His mission, would be like a father taking food from his children in order to throw it to their pets (Matthews 15:26). The exact word Jesus used here, in Greek, was kunarion, meaning "small dog" or "pet dog." This is a completely different word from the term kuon, used to refer to unspiritual people or to an "unclean" animal.

Jesus frequently tested people to prove their intentions, often through response questions or challenges (see John 4:16–18; and 4:50–53). His response to the Canaanite woman is similar. In testing her, Jesus declined her request and explained that she had

no legitimate expectation of His help. The woman, however, lived out the principle Jesus Himself taught in the parable of the persistent widow (Luke 18:1–8). Her response proved that she understood fully what Jesus was saying, yet had enough conviction to ask anyway (Matthew 15:27). Jesus acknowledged her faith—calling it “great”—and granted her request (Matthew 15:28).

So, according to both the context and language involved, Jesus wasn't referring to the Canaanite woman as a “dog,” either directly or indirectly. He wasn't using an epithet or racial slur but making a point about the priorities He'd been given by God. He was also testing the faith of the woman and teaching an important lesson to His disciples. (Source: [GotQuestions.org](http://GotQuestions.org))

**Matthew 15:27 But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."**

NET Matthew 15:27 "Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

NLT Matthew 15:27 She replied, "That's true, Lord, but even dogs are allowed to eat the scraps that fall beneath their master's table."

ESV Matthew 15:27 She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

NIV Matthew 15:27 "Yes, Lord," she said, "but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table."

GNT Matthew 15:27 ὁ ε πεν, Να κ ριε, κα γ ρ τ κυν ρια σθ ει π τ ν ψιχ ων τ ν πιπτ ντων π τ ς τραπ ζης τ ν κυρ ων α τ ν.

KJV Matthew 15:27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table.

- **Yes:** Mt 8:8 Ge 32:10 Job 40:4,5 42:2-6 Ps 51:4,5 Eze 16:63 Da 9:18 Lu 7:6,7 15:18,19 18:13 23:40-42 Ro 3:4,19 1Co 15:8,9 1Ti 1:13-15
- **But:** Mt 5:45 Lu 16:21 Ro 3:29 10:12 Eph 3:8,19
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### I'LL TAKE EVEN THE CRUMBS!

**But she said, "Yes, Lord** (KJV = "Truth, Lord") - She doesn't dispute that Gentiles were to Israel as dogs but says, **Yes, Lord**. She agrees with Jesus and again refers to Him as **Lord**. See referred to Jesus as **Son of David** and twice as **Lord** neither modes of addressing Jesus by most of the Jews until His final entry into Jerusalem (Mt 21:9), but within days their cry changed to "Crucify Him!" The following song by Darrell Evans was the nameless woman's song...

#### Yes Lord

I'm trading my sorrow  
I'm trading my shame  
I'm laying it down for the joy of the Lord

I'm trading my sickness  
I'm trading my pain  
I'm laying it down for the joy of the Lord

And we say yes Lord yes Lord yes yes Lord  
Yes Lord yes Lord yes yes Lord

Yes Lord yes Lord yes yes Lord Amen

I'm pressed but not crushed persecuted not abandoned  
Struck down but not destroyed  
I'm blessed beyond the curse for his promise will endure  
And his joy's gonna be my strength

Though the sorrow may last for the night

His joy comes with the morning

**Brian Bell** - But she wasn't coming to him on the goodness of her cause, but on the Goodness of His heart. Not on how she presented her plea, but instead on the excellence of His power. It is our task to simply be empty...so He can fill us. It is our task to confess our filthiness...so He can wash us. It is our task to be less than nothing...so He can be more than everything to us. You're a dog – Yes Lord, but I will wag my tail, fetch, sit up, even beg for my Master. 4. You're a sheep – Yes, Lord, but sheep need a shepherd.

**Brian Bell** - FAITH AGREES - Faith Pleads but never Disputes. 1. Note: she never says, but or if, not even yet (27 not in orig.) 2. Faith in God implies agreement with what God says. a) You are comparable to a little dog. Truth Lord. b) I can't feed the little dogs before the children. Truth, Lord, that wouldn't be right. c) It's not your time yet. Yes, Lord, 1st the children at meal time,...but the dogs right after dinner right? :) 3. God's Word is sometimes like a salve to a wound; and other times a knife that cuts, or a sword that slays! – Don't fight against it – Say, **Truth Lord!**

**Luther:** "Was not that a master stroke? She *snares* Christ in his own words."

**Brian Bell** - FAITH ARGUES (not argumentative) M. Her arguments were correct, strictly logical, & thorough. 1. The best way to reason with a man is to take His own statements and argue upon them. 2. She was bold like Jacob wrestling with the angel, who even overcame the angel. The angel said, Let Me go, for the day breaks. But Jacob said, I will not let You go unless You bless me!

**Guelich** writes ""This "title" of "**Lord**" that consistently comes on the lips of "believers" in Matthew occurs only this one time with confession overtones in Mark and sets the stage for Jesus" concluding remark and his offer of help to the woman." ([WBC](#))

**Guzik** - It was as if she said, "Jesus, I understand that the focus of Your ministry is to the Jews—that they have a special place in God's redemptive plan. Yet I also understand that Your ministry extends beyond the Jewish people, and I want to be part of that extended blessing.". Her response is especially meaningful in light of the increasing rejection of Jesus by the Jewish religious leaders. It was as if the woman said, "I'm not asking for the portion that belongs to the children, just the crumbs that they don't want." In the flow of Matthew's gospel, there was more and more that the Jewish religious establishment did not want to receive.

**But** - Now she turns Jesus' argument to her advantage. Notice this Gentile acknowledges that the Jews had the first claim on Jesus' ministry by referring to **the children's crumbs**. That is to say the Jews got the first piece of bread (AKA "THE GOSPEL") so to speak, but she would be happy to take the crumbs. And so secondly, she accepted her low place before Jesus by not debating the reference to little dogs. Thirdly, notice that she picks up on Jesus' parabolic statement about dogs and children. She had ears to hear what He was saying. And so she made the point that if literal little **dogs** (she also uses kunarion = little dogs, pets) eating under the table had a right to the literal crumbs, then she, like a "little Gentile dog," had a right to a Gospel "crumb" that would fall from Jesus' "table." And without going too far, sadly when Jesus had given the "bread" of the Gospel to the "children" for the most part they discarded it, so that what was "on the floor" so to speak was hardly just a few crumbs, but a "full meal of Gospel bread!" Whereas most of the "children" did not receive, she did receive what Jesus offered.

**Wuest** - How adroit was this woman's plea. Love sharpens the sensibilities and reason (AND I WOULD ADD A SENSE OF DESPERATION REGARDING HER DAUGHTER WITH THE "SOLUTION" STANDING RIGHT IN FRONT OF HER! A MOTHER'S LOVE IS A POWERFUL FORCE!).

**Even the dogs** (the little puppies) **feed on the crumbs** (little crumbs) **which fall from their masters' table.**" - With wit, logic and faith she offered an wonderful response to Jesus. As Plummer says "The metaphor which Christ had used as a reason for rejecting her petition she turns into a reason for granting it." And so in her reply she uses the diminutive for **dogs** and **crumbs**, the latter speaking of small crumbs that in a sense "expressed her unworthiness to receive a large blessing." (Constable)

**Brian Bell** - Yes, dog I am, but you have come all the way here to Sidon. a) I am not like the scavenger dog out in the street; I am a little puppy under your table awaiting some Christ-Crumbs! ...She could not call him Father. She could not claim the privilege of a child. But she could call Him Master. And Masters feed their dogs (at least crumbs). b) The woman, being a Gentile, had no covenant right to come to Jesus and call Him Son of David (22); but she could call Him Lord and have her prayer answered. (1) Jesus was not rude to her; He was only testing & strengthening her faith 2. Like the prodigal that came back content with just being one of his fathers hired servants. a) She spied out a dog's relation to his master & made the most of it. b) She is the only one we know of that ever answered Jesus' mini-parables back with a mini-parable.

**Broadus** - The Jewish people, she is aware, have a special mission in the world, and special privileges; and of these they need not be deprived by her request, for a despised Gentile also may have an humble share of Messianic blessing. He is not now healing any in Israel, and the chosen people will lose no Messianic good by this one act of pity for her. In Mark, what our Lord had said to her is introduced by the words, 'Let the children first be filled (Mk 7:27+);' implying that afterwards the dogs might get something.



**Guzik on but even** - These were two faith-filled words: Yet even. She accepted Jesus' description and asked for mercy despite it—or perhaps because of it. “She would not give over, though he gave her three repulses. So as she said, like Jacob, I will not thee go, until thou bless me. And as he, like a prince, so she, like a princess, prevailed with God and obtained the thing which she desired.” (Poole)

On the other hand **Constable** writes “In her reply the woman said, “for even,” not “but even” (Gr. kai gar). This is an important distinction because she did not challenge what Jesus had said but acquiesced to His truthfulness in saying it. Her words reveal great faith and spiritual wisdom. She did not ask for help because her case made her an exception or because she believed she had a right to Jesus' help. She did not argue about God's justice in seeking the Jews first. She simply threw herself on Jesus' mercy without pleading any merit.

**Spurgeon** -- “Dear friend, possibly someone has whispered in your ear, ‘Suppose you are not one of the elect.’ Well, that was very much what our Lord's expression meant to her ... Notice that this woman does not battle with that truth at all, she does not raise any question about it; she wisely waives it, and she just goes on praying, ‘Lord, help me! Lord, have mercy upon me!’ I invite you, dear friend, to do just the same.”

**Wiersbe** - She immediately seized on His illustration about the children's bread, which was exactly what He wanted her to do. We may paraphrase her reply: “It is true that we Gentiles do not sit at the table as children and eat the bread. But even the pet dogs under the table can eat some of the crumbs!” What a tremendous testimony of faith!

**Guzik** - We need to see the power of coming to God as we are, and letting Him make true His promises to those weak and unclean. If the woman had responded, “Who are you calling a dog?” she would not have received from Jesus what her daughter needed. Her humble, faith-filled submission to Jesus brought the victory. “Nothing appealed to our blessed Lord more than **faith** coupled with **humility**.” (Ironsides)

**A T Robertson** - She took no offence at the implication of being a Gentile dog. The rather she with quick wit took Christ's very word for little dogs (κυνάρια [kunaria]) and deftly turned it to her own advantage, for the little dogs eat of the crumbs (ψιχίων [psichiōn], little morsels, diminutive again) that fall from the table of their masters (κυρίων [kuriōn]), the children.

**Dogs** (2952) see above on [kunarion](#)

**Chuck Smith** - Now, in those days they did not have knives and forks and spoons. They did not have eating utensils. They didn't even use chopsticks. They used the utensils that God first created for man to eat with. They used their hands. And the eating was an interesting process. Always bread. And usually you would break your bread, pull it off and then dip it in the soup or in the sauces or in whatever. And you'd use your bread oftentimes as sort of a spoon. And when we're over there, we usually go out for what they call an oriental meal, but it's more of an Arabic type of a meal, where they serve you the pita bread and all of these sauces. And you break the thing and you do your dipping and all, and you have all these exotic kind of salsas and everything else to eat with your pita bread. But they use their hands; they use their fingers. Now, of course, by the time you're through eating, you've got the grease and everything else all over your hands. So, the final piece of bread, you would take it and use it to wipe off as a napkin. You'd use it to wipe off your hands. And then, you'd toss it under the table to the little dog down there waiting, standing up and “woof, woof.” You stand up and you drop him this final piece of bread that had all these delicious juices on it. And the dogs would eat these crumbs or these pieces of bread that would be used to wipe off the hands from the master's table.

**D L Moody** - Don't be satisfied with crumbs. Go for the whole loaf.

**Adam Clarke** noted that this Gentile woman's prayer had nine important features “1. It is short; 2. humble; 3. full of faith; 4. fervent; 5. modest; 6. respectful; 7. rational; 8. relying only on the mercy of God; 9. persevering.”

**Matthew 15:28** Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

NET Matthew 15:28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, your faith is great! Let what you want be done for you." And her daughter was healed from that hour.

NLT Matthew 15:28 "Dear woman," Jesus said to her, "your faith is great. Your request is granted." And her daughter was instantly healed.

ESV Matthew 15:28 Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.

NIV Matthew 15:28 Then Jesus answered, "Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

GNT Matthew 15:28 τ τε ποκριθε ς ησο ς ε πεν α τ , γ ναι, μεγ λη σου π σις· γενηθ τω σοι ς θ λεις. κα θη θυγ τηρ α τ ς π τ ς ρας κε νης.

KJV Matthew 15:28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

- **Jesus:** Job 13:15 23:10 La 3:32
- **great:** Mt 8:10 14:31 1Sa 2:30 Lu 17:5 Ro 4:19,20 2Th 1:3
- **shall be done:** Mt 8:13 9:29,30 Ps 145:19 Mk 5:34 7:29,30 9:23,24 Lu 7:9,50 Lu 18:42,43 Joh 4:50-53
- **[Matthew 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great** Not just "Woman" but more expressive as "**O woman.**" As **R T France** says "No-one else receives from Jesus the accolade."

**Brian Bell** - Persistence 1. Not that she earned Christ's ear or earned His healing power. Her persistence was only a demonstration that she had faith. What a great lesson to every mother (AND EVERY FATHER). Mother's plead for your daughters & for your sons until you hear, O Woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.

**THOUGHT** - I pleaded for 20 years for my son Wesley who experimented with every drug except heroine and was probably sober only a few days in those 20 years (not exaggerating!). He called one day from a grave yard and said he had a rope over the tree limb and was going to kill himself. And yet God heard and God saved him. After 20 years of praying! And the same story applies to my daughter Lauren for whom I also prayed 20 years! And the same was true for me, for my father prayed for me almost exactly 20 years (age 19 to age 39) before I was saved by grace through faith. If they are still living, it is too soon to give up praying "Help, Lord" for your loved one. See [my personal testimony of God's grace](#).

**Broadus** - The world is ever admiring and lauding greatness, but it is great intellect or imagination, great ambition or force of character, beauty or amiability, great learning or discoveries, possessions or conquests; here is the noblest praise for the truest greatness. The centurion's faith likewise excited the wonder of Jesus (see on Mt 8:10+), and he too was a heathen.

**Guzik** adds "Jesus never said this to another person. He complimented the great faith of the Roman centurion who asked Jesus to heal his servant (Matthew 8:10), but He said it to the crowd, not to the centurion directly. This Gentile woman heard it from Jesus directly.. Significantly, the only two people to receive this compliment from Jesus were these Gentiles. This shows us that (1) Great faith may be found in unexpected places—not merely Gentiles, but a centurion and a woman! (2) Great faith is sometimes measured from its disadvantages. Their faith was great because it did not have the advantage of being nourished by the institutions of Judaism. (3) Faith is often greatest when it is expressed on behalf of someone else's need.

**It shall be done for you as you wish** - NLT - "Your request is granted." "let it come to pass for thee."

**Trench on as you wish** - "He who at first seemed as though he would have denied her the smallest boon, now opens to her the full treasure-house of his grace, and bids her to help herself, to carry away what she will. He had shown to her for awhile, like Joseph to his brethren, the aspect of severity; but, like Joseph, he could not maintain it long—or rather he would not maintain it an instant longer than was needful, and after that word of hers, that mighty word of an undoubting faith, it was needful no more."

**Broadus** - Our Lord does not speak of her humility, though so remarkable, for that was a result of her faith. Perhaps the earliest offspring of unbelief is pride (1 Tim. 3:6), while faith at once gives birth to humility; and in both cases, the progeny reinforces the parent. So, too, her faith had led to perseverance—a perseverance which may be compared with that of Jacob, in wrestling with the same Eternal Word (Gen. 32:24), who was now permanently incarnate as Jesus.

**And her daughter was healed at once** (cf Mt 8:13+; Mt 9:22+) - **Healed** is [iaomai](#) which meant she was made whole, restored to bodily health as when Jesus healed the demon possessed boy in Luke 9:42+ Luke recording "While he was still approaching, the demon slammed him to the ground and threw him into a convulsion. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, and **healed** ([iaomai](#)) the boy and gave him back to his father." Here the healed daughter would be restored to her mother.

**Wiersbe** - It is worth noting that both of the persons in the Gospel of Matthew who had "great faith" were Gentiles: this Canaanite woman and the Roman centurion (Matt. 8:5–13). In both cases, Jesus healed the one in need from a distance. Spiritually speaking, the Gentiles were "afar off" until Calvary, when Jesus Christ died for both Jews and Gentiles and made reconciliation possible (Eph. 2:11ff). This woman's faith was great because she persisted in asking and trusting when everything seemed against her. Certainly

her race was against her: She was a Gentile. Her sex was against her, for most Jewish rabbis paid little attention to women. It seemed that the disciples were against her, and Christ's words might have led her to believe that even He was against her. All of these obstacles only made her persist in asking.

**Edwards** points out that ""In contrast to the tradition of the elders Jesus [authoritatively] embraces the alienated of the Mosaic and rabbinic tradition: a **leper** (Mark 1:40-45+), **tax collectors and sinners** (Mark 2:13-17+), and even **unclean Gentiles**, including a Syrophenician woman (Mark 7:24-30)." (PNTC-Mark)

**Mark Akin** applies this story to us today - What a magnificent picture of salvation we have in this story. Yes Lord, we are all dogs under the table with no rights whatsoever as a member of the family. I acknowledge I don't deserve a place at the table, but I believe there is enough even for me on the table! I know you have some for me. I don't deserve it, but I desperately need it. Just a few crumbs will be enough. That I believe. Then in amazing grace and mercy our Savior lifts us up, no longer a dog (sinner) but a child (saved), no longer under the table but now a member of the family at the table. Are you willing to see yourself as the dog you are that you might be transformed into the child you might become?! Your sin is greater than perhaps you realize but His grace is greater than you could ever imagine.

Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much;  
None can ever ask too much.

This Gentile woman came in faith in the greatness of the One she was addressing Lord, the one Who is our King, which reminds me of Newton's great hymn

### **Come, My Soul, Thy Suit Prepare**

[\(Listen to a beautiful vocal by Matt Foreman - it will move you deeply!\)](#)

by John Newton

Come, my soul, thy suit prepare:  
Jesus loves to answer prayer;  
He Himself has bid thee pray,  
Therefore will not say thee nay;  
Therefore will not say thee nay.

Thou art coming to a King,  
Large petitions with thee bring;  
For His grace and power are such,  
None can ever ask too much;  
None can ever ask too much.

With my burden I begin:  
Lord, remove this load of sin;  
Let Thy blood, for sinners spilt,  
Set my conscience free from guilt;  
Set my conscience free from guilt.

Lord, I come to Thee for rest,  
Take possession of my breast;  
There Thy blood bought right maintain,  
And without a rival reign;  
And without a rival reign.

As the image in the glass  
Answers the beholder's face;  
Thus unto my heart appear,  
Print Thine own resemblance there;  
Print Thine own resemblance there.

While I am a pilgrim here,  
Let Thy love my spirit cheer;  
As my Guide, my Guard, my Friend,  
Lead me to my journey's end;  
Lead me to my journey's end.

Show me what I have to do,  
Every hour my strength renew:  
Let me live a life of faith,  
Let me die Thy people's death;  
Let me die Thy people's death.

May God open the eyes of our heart to the priceless truth of the privilege that we are "coming to a King" so that "large petitions with thee bring." Amen

And so Jesus is teaching His disciples that

## **FOODS ARE CLEAN GENTILES ARE CLEAN!**

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### **Guzik on why her faith was great:**

1. Her faith was great, even compared to her other virtues. She was humble, she was patient, she was persevering, she cared for her child. Yet Jesus didn't compliment any of these good things, but only her faith.
  2. Her faith was great because it was unlikely. No one might have expected a Gentile to trust Jesus so much.
  3. Her faith was great because she worshipped Jesus even before she had an answer from Him.
  4. Her faith was great because it had been tested so severely. It's hard to think of a greater test than a demon-possessed child; but her faith was also tried by the seeming indifference or coldness of Jesus.
  5. Her faith was great because it was clever. She turned Jesus' word inside-out and made what might have been taken as an insult as a door open for faith
  6. Her faith was great because it concerned a need right in front of her, and a real need at that. Many people have faith for everything except those things that are right in front of them.
  7. Her faith was great because it would not give up. She did not stop until she got what she needed from Jesus.
  8. You could say that her faith conquered Jesus. He not only healed her daughter but He did so immediately, something that she had not even asked for.
- 

### **Greg Laurie - CARTE BLANCHE**

"Then Jesus answered and said to her, 'O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.' And her daughter was healed from that very hour." —MATTHEW 15:28

HOW THE CHURCH needs intercessors today! The woman described in Matthew 15 fits this description. Her daughter was "severely demon-possessed" and she pleaded with Jesus to heal her. This woman, like any loving mother, cared for her daughter. She loved her more than life itself. She wanted Jesus to take action—but on her initial approach, the Lord appeared almost heartless and uncaring. The text simply says He "answered her not a word" (verse 23).

Why did He respond this way? First, it would be helpful to understand the woman's background. The Bible says she was a Canaanite. The Canaanites, you'll remember, were idol worshippers, the ancient enemies of Israel whom God ordered destroyed.

Here was a descendant of the avowed enemies of Israel. It's entirely possible that this woman (whom Mark identifies as a Syro-Phoenician) was a worshiper of the false goddess Ashtoreth. Yet she comes to Jesus, seeking help. Apparently, her idols had been unable to assist her—in fact, they had contributed to the problem. They no doubt helped to bring her daughter under the control of demons.

When Jesus "answered her not a word," it appeared He was rejecting her. But He was not trying to destroy her faith; He wanted to develop it. He was not playing games with her, nor was He trying to make the situation more difficult. He was seeking to draw out her faith. He could see how strong her faith was and how she was aligning herself with His will—so He set her apart as an example of true faith. He put up barriers so she might step over them and show her true commitment. Jesus knew what she wanted and He knew what He was going to do.

The Master had grown tired of phoniness and superficiality. He had spent considerable time exposing the sham religion of the Pharisees and repeatedly emphasized the critical importance of the heart. Finally, He encountered someone with a true heart. He discovered an honest person, someone who wanted Him for the right reason.

How did the woman react to His silence? No sooner had Jesus put up this barrier than the woman stepped over it. She was absolutely undeterred. She pleaded with Him a second time, "Lord, help me!" (verse 25).

At that point Jesus moved to level two. Listen to His response: "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs" (verse 26). What strong words to say to a woman with a demon-possessed daughter!

His words sound insulting, but they're not as harsh as they first seem. In those days people used two different words to talk about dogs. One was a phrase that described mangy, dirty mongrels which roamed the streets and lived off of garbage. The second was used for the family pet, the dog you really loved. The latter is the word Jesus used here. He was saying, "It is not right to take food from the master's table and give it to the family pet."

But not even this response could deter this woman. Her faith was so strong that she realized even a tiny leftover of Jesus' power would be enough to heal her daughter. She first scaled the barrier of silence and now she hurdled the barrier of seeming rejection. She replied, "True, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table" (verse 27).

This is what Jesus had been waiting to hear; here was a woman who would not let go. At that moment the heavens opened and Jesus gave her carte blanche: "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire" (verse 28). And her daughter was healed that instant.

What earned this woman such an incredible privilege? Persistence and commitment. When the door was shut in her face, she kept knocking. When Christ portrayed her as a dog, she simply picked up His words—just like a good little dog would pick up his master's stick—and dropped them at His feet. She would not give up. She would not go home without the touch of the Master on her daughter's life. If at first she did not succeed, she would keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking.

This woman was a true intercessor. Intercessory prayer means that you stand in the gap for someone and you will not give up. You are going to keep praying for that person till you see something happen.

People can reject your influence and escape your presence, but they can never escape your prayers. Sidlow Baxter said, "Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons, but they are helpless against our prayers."

So take a tip from this Syro-Phoenician woman. Don't give up! Hang in there! Keep praying! Keep seeking! Keep knocking! If an obstacle lies in front of you, go over it. If a door is shut, knock harder. Don't give up!

The hurdle in front of you may be the last one before the finish line.

Look at the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, where He speaks about the value and reward of persistent prayer (Matthew 7:7–12).

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**Simpson** - Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.

Oh, the victories of prayer! They are the mountain tops of the Bible. They take us back to the plains of Mamre, to the fords of Peniel, to the prison of Joseph, to the triumphs of Moses, to the transcendent victories of Joshua, to the deliverances of David, to the miracles of Elijah and Elisha, to the whole story of the Master's life, to the secret of Pentecost, to the keynote of Paul's unparalleled ministry, to the lives of saints and the deaths of martyrs, to all that is most sacred and sweet in the history of the Church and the experience of the children of God. And when, for us, the last conflict shall have passed, and the footstool of prayer shall have given place to the harp of praise, the spots of time that shall be gilded with the most celestial and eternal radiance, shall be those, often linked with deepest sorrow and darkest night, over which we have the inscription, "Jehovah-Shammah: The Lord was there!"

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**F B Meyer - Matthew 15:28** Be it done unto thee even as thou wilt. (R.V.).

This was a remarkable permission. It is not often that Christ takes the key to his stores out of the bunch which hangs at his girdle, and entrusts it to a soul, saying in effect, Take what you will. "Of the work of my hands, command ye Me."

1. We must intercede for others.—This woman came for her child. We must always be on our guard when we ask much for self, lest somehow our requests be prompted by self-aggrandizement. If we do ask for power, wisdom, or likeness to Christ, let it be that we may help others better. The apostle says that Christ "loosed us from our sins ... and made us priests" (Revelation 1:5–6, R.V.). We all need this loosing, that we may become intercessors.

2. We must accord Christ his right place.—The Canaanitish woman came to Him as the Son of David, and He answered her not a

word. She had no claim on Him as such. That He was the Jews' Messiah could not help her. She had given Him that title by courtesy and hearsay. It was necessary that by his silence she should be driven to find Him for herself. When she gave Him a universal title, and said, Lord, help me! worshipping at his feet, she was a step nearer the goal.

3. We must answer his affirmations with Yea.—He told her what She was. She was an alien and outcast. She was not part of the chosen family; she must understand her true position, and take it. And she did. She said, Yea, Lord. If you can perfectly accept God's will, so that it shall take the place of your own; if you will take your place among the dogs beneath the table, you are sure to obtain answers to your prayers—God can let you have your way, because it will be his.

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## **Bold Persistence**

Jesus answered and said to her, "O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire." —Matthew 15:28

Today's Scripture: Matthew 15:21-28

In 1953, a fledgling business called Rocket Chemical Company and its staff of three set out to create a line of rust-prevention solvents and degreasers for use in the aerospace industry. It took them 40 attempts to perfect their formula. The original secret formula for WD-40—which stands for Water Displacement, 40th attempt—is still in use today. What a story of persistence!

The gospel of Matthew records another story of bold persistence. A Canaanite woman had a daughter who was possessed by a demon. She had no hope for her daughter—until she heard that Jesus was in the region.

This desperate woman came to Jesus with her need because she believed He could help her. She cried out to Him even though everything and everybody seemed to be against her—race, religious background, gender, the disciples, Satan, and seemingly even Jesus (Matt. 15:22-27). Despite all of these obstacles, she did not give up. With bold persistence, she pushed her way through the dark corridors of difficulty, desperate need, and rejection. The result? Jesus commended her for her faith and healed her daughter (v.28).

We too are invited to approach Jesus with bold persistence. As we keep asking, seeking, and knocking, we will find grace and mercy in our time of need. By: Marvin Williams ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Something happens when we pray,  
Take our place and therein stay,  
Wrestle on till break of day;  
Ever let us pray.  
—Anon.

Persistence in prayer pleases God.

**Matthew 15:29 Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there.**

NET Matthew 15:29 When he left there, Jesus went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up a mountain, where he sat down.

NLT Matthew 15:29 Jesus returned to the Sea of Galilee and climbed a hill and sat down.

ESV Matthew 15:29 Jesus went on from there and walked beside the Sea of Galilee. And he went up on the mountain and sat down there.

NIV Matthew 15:29 Jesus left there and went along the Sea of Galilee. Then he went up on a mountainside and sat down.

GNT Matthew 15:29 Κα μεταβ ς κεθεν ησο ς λθεν παρ τ ν θ λασσαν τ ς Γαλιλα ας, κα ναβ ς ε ς τ ρος κ θητο κε .

KJV Matthew 15:29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

- **and came:** Mk 7:31

- **to:** Mt 4:18 Jos 12:3, Chinneroth, Isa 9:1 Mk 1:16 Lu 5:1, lake of Gennesaret, Joh 6:1,23 21:1, Tiberias
- **gone up:** Mt 5:1 13:2
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

DECAPOLIS = 10 Cities  
Names in Black

**Departing from there, Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up on the mountain, He was sitting there-**  
"After departing from there, the region of Tyre and Sidon where that woman lived (Mt 15:21), Jesus went along by the Sea of Galilee, and having gone up to the mountain, He was sitting there. We learn from Mark that Jesus went around the Sea of Galilee, apparently on the east side, stopping in **"the region of Decapolis"** (Mark 7:31+), another Gentile area. Although His primary ministry was still to the Jews, the Lord continually reached out beyond the covenant people, giving a preview of the extension of the kingdom into the whole world (cf. Matt. 28:19+; Acts 1:8+)." (MacArthur)

**Decapolis** referred to ten predominantly Gentile cities that were authorized by the Romans to mint their own coins, run their own courts, and have their own armies.

#### Related Resource:

- Alfred Edersheim - [A GROUP OF MIRACLES AMONG A SEMI-HEATHEN POPULATION](#) (St. Matt. 15:29–31; St. Mark 7:31–37; St. Mark 8:22–26; St. Matt. 11:27–30.)

### James Smith - Handfuls of Purpose - THE GREAT PHYSICIAN Matthew 15:29–31

Christ's public ministry began with the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Does not every real ministry begin with this? His first recorded utterance is, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me. He hath sent me to heal, to recover the sight of the blind, and to set at liberty the bruised" (Luke 4:18). This is His diploma.

#### I. The Position of the Healer.

"He went up into a mountain and sat down" (v. 29). The actions as well as the words of Christ were prophetic. While He sat upon the mountain great multitudes came unto Him, and He healed them all. What a picture of Christ's position and power! He has gone up into the mount of Heaven, and is sat down at the right hand of God to give gifts unto men. Whosoever will may come. None are cast out. He heals them all. He now sits as He did on that mount by the Sea of Galilee, waiting to be gracious. No question asked, no fee required, no prescription given, but instant help and healing imparted. Before God Jesus sits as the only hope and health for a perishing world. "Look unto Me and be ye saved, for I am God" (Isa. 45:22).

#### II. The Character of the Healed.

1. THE LAME. Those whose legs are unequal, and whose walk is very unsteady, who have many an up and down. There are many lame Christians vainly trying to walk like those whose legs are equal. It is no use trying to conceal the limp. If there are failure and weakness bring them to Jesus. He maketh the lame to walk.
2. THE BLIND. Those who walk in darkness. Their outward life may be without a limp, but their minds are darkened. They have no assurance; they know not where they are going. They depend on human hands to guide them; they have not the eye-salve of the Holy Spirit. He can make the blind to see for themselves.
3. THE DUMB. This is a type of those who can both see and walk, but whose lips are sealed. They know the truth, and their actions may be faultless, but their tongues are dumb for God—moral beauties, but spiritual dummies. This great Physician can also make the dumb to speak.
4. THE MAIMED. This is a very plentiful class, and very pitiful. They once had hands and feet and tongues for God, but sin has maimed and marred their members, so that they are now useless in the service of Christ. They once had power, but the Holy Ghost is grieved, and their testimony is maimed (see Judges 16:20). "I will heal your backsliding" (Jer. 3:22).
5. THE NONDESCRIPT. "And many others." Among this lot there would likely be found "all sorts"—the sick, the sad, the fevered, and the broken-hearted. Christ can heal every ailment. Everything that hinders our joy in God and our testimony for Him may be confessed as a disease. Is it care, anxiety, temper, fear, despondency? He healeth all thy diseases.

#### III. The Place of Healing.

"They cast them down at Jesus' feet" (v. 30). The place of blessing is at the feet of Him who is able to tread upon the surging waves of humanity's sorrows (Matt. 14:25). Those bleeding feet on Calvary's cross proclaim

victory through His blood over every sin to all who believe. The way into this place of perfect healing is to get down, down to Jesus' feet.

#### IV. The Results that Followed—

1. THE HEALED BORE TESTIMONY. They saw the dumb speaking, the lame walking, the blind seeing, the maimed to be whole. Every one used the gift received to the glory of the Great Healer. What a change! The power of Christ could not be hid in the lives of the healed ones.

2. THE MULTITUDE GLORIFIED GOD (v. 31). Why has the multitude ceased to wonder and glorify God now? Have we not the same all-sufficient Saviour to-day waiting to make us perfectly whole, that our lives might be worthy of His Almighty grace and healing power. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven" (Matt. 5:16).

#### Related Resources:

- Alfred Edersheim - [A Group of Miracles among a Semi-Heathen Population](#)

**Matthew 15:30 And large crowds came to Him, bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute, and many others, and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them.**

NET Matthew 15:30 Then large crowds came to him bringing with them the lame, blind, crippled, mute, and many others. They laid them at his feet, and he healed them.

NLT Matthew 15:30 A vast crowd brought to him people who were lame, blind, crippled, those who couldn't speak, and many others. They laid them before Jesus, and he healed them all.

ESV Matthew 15:30 And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others, and they put them at his feet, and he healed them,

NIV Matthew 15:30 Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them.

GNT Matthew 15:30 κα προσ λθον α τ χλοι πολλο χοντες μεθ αυτ ν χωλο ς, τυφλο ς, κυλλο ς, κωφο ς, κα τ ρου ς πολλο ς κα ρριψαν α το ς παρ το ς π δα ς α το , κα θερ πευσεν α το ς

KJV Matthew 15:30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them:

- **large:** Mt 4:23,24 11:4,5 14:35,36 Ps 103:3 Isa 35:5,6 Mk 1:32-34 Mk 6:54-56 Lu 6:17-19 7:21,22 Ac 2:22 5:15,16 19:11,12
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### MESSIAH HEALS ALL WHO ARE LAID AT HIS FEET

**And large crowds came to Him** - Jesus didn't go to the Gentiles but they came to Him **John Broadus** - Here, seated on a point in the mountain range, probably in view of the lake, He wrought many miracles of healing, and again fed the multitudes. In this case a large proportion of those present **must have been Gentiles**, as the **Ten Cities were more a Gentile than a Jewish district**. He must have spent at least several days in this region, since it required some time for his presence to become generally known, and the Four Thousand had been 'three days' (Mt 15:32) in close attendance on his ministry.

**Broadus on large crowds** - Great multitudes, literally, many crowds, as in so many other passages. We have here another general account of numerous miracles. (Comp. Mt 4:23; 8:16; 9:35; 12:15 f.) One of those wrought at this time and place was the healing of a deaf and dumb man, described by Mark alone. (Mk 7:32-37+.)

**bringing with them those who were lame, crippled, blind, mute** - **Broadus on crippled** (kullōs = crooked, bent; of bodily limbs crippled, deformed - 4x = Matt. 15:30; Matt. 15:31; Matt. 18:8; Mk. 9:43) - The word (kullōs) rendered maimed signifies crooked, bent, contracted; it is sometimes applied to cases of mutilation, the loss of some part of the body (Mt 18:8), which is the meaning of our word maimed, but is not often so used, and probably the best English word here would be Crippled.' Malchus' ear (Mt 26:31) is the only recorded instance of our Lord's miraculously restoring a missing part of the body.

**And many others** - So many they could not even be named. After all Jesus was the Great Physician and no disease would escape



His "diagnosis" and total cure!

**and they laid them down at His feet; and He healed them** - No exceptions stated. He healed them all! Vincent says "Very graphic. Lit., flung them down; not carelessly, but in haste, because so many were coming on the same errand."

**Healed** (cured) (2323) **therapeuo** from **therapon** = an attendant, servant) means primarily to care for, to wait upon, minister to. It has two main senses in the NT, one speaking of rendering service (Acts 17:25) and the more common use describing medical aspects such as to take care of the sick, to heal, to cure (Matt. 4:24; 12:10; Mark 1:34; Luke 6:7; 10:9), to recover health, to restore. Therapeúō means to heal miraculously in Matt. 4:23, 24; 10:1, 8; Acts 4:14. Providing care to improve a situation.

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### Stephen Olford - "Down at Jesus' feet."—Matthew 15:30

What a blessed place is this! O, to be found continually at His feet! Being "down at Jesus' feet" is:

A Place of Healing. We read here that the lame—those who could not walk; the blind—those who could not see; the dumb—those who could not talk; the maimed—those who could not work, all were cast down with many others at Jesus' feet. "Cast... down" (Matt. 15:30, KJV) means to be thrown down in all their worthlessness and helplessness—and Jesus healed them!

A Place of Learning. "Mary... sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word" (Luke 10:39). The Lord spoke of this as more needful than much serving. Oh, to be found here.

A Place of Worship. "They came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him." (Matt. 28:9). The disciples had met the risen Lord and He had said, "Rejoice!" (v. 9), and they worshiped.

At Your feet is a blessed place, Lord.

O, to be found continually there!

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### Matthew 15:31 So the crowd marveled as they saw the mute speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they glorified the God of Israel.

NET Matthew 15:31 As a result, the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing, and they praised the God of Israel.

NLT Matthew 15:31 The crowd was amazed! Those who hadn't been able to speak were talking, the crippled were made well, the lame were walking, and the blind could see again! And they praised the God of Israel.

ESV Matthew 15:31 so that the crowd wondered, when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled healthy, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they glorified the God of Israel.

NIV Matthew 15:31 The people were amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the crippled made well, the lame walking and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

GNT Matthew 15:31 στε τιν ἄφωνοι λαλοῦντες, κωφοὶ ἰσχυροὶ καὶ χωλοὶ περιπατοῦντες καὶ τυφλοὶ βλέποντες· καὶ ὄξασαν τὸ θεῖον ἔργον.

KJV Matthew 15:31 Insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the God of Israel.

- **mute:** Mt 9:33 Mk 7:37
- **the maimed:** Mt 18:8 Mk 9:43 Lu 14:13,21
- **the lame:** Mt 21:14 Ac 3:2-11 14:8-10
- **and they:** Mt 9:8 Ps 50:15,23 Mk 2:12 Lu 7:16 17:15-18 18:43 Joh 9:24
- **God:** Ge 32:28 33:20 Ex 24:10
- **[Matthew 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GENTILES MARVEL AT MESSIAH'S MIRACLES

So the crowd marveled as they saw (**blepo**) the mute (**kophos**) speaking, the crippled restored, and the lame (**cholos**) walking, and the blind (**tuphos**) seeing - This predominantly Gentile crowd was struck with awe with instantaneous healings one after

another! Mark has "they were utterly astonished, saying, 'He has done all things well' " (Mk 7:37+).

**Marveled** (2296) (**thaumazo** from **thauma** [from **thaomai** = to wonder] = wonder, admiration) means to wonder, marvel, be struck with admiration or astonishment. To be surprised by the unexpected. **Thaumazo** describes the human response when confronted by divine revelation in some form (Mt 9:33). Be surprised (Gal 1:6). It denotes incredulous surprise. **Thaumazo** was a rhetorical device used in law courts and politics to attack things done by the opposition party. **NIDNTT** on Thaumazo in Classic Greek - The word-group associated with **thauma** is found in Gk. from the 8th and 7th centuries, to designate that which by its appearance arouses astonishment and amazement. The root is cognate with **theaomai**, to look at. **TDNT** on Classic Greek uses - The group has first the sense of astonishment, whether critical or inquisitive, then admiration, with a nuance of awe or fear at what is unusual or mysterious, e.g., miracles or oracles in religion, also magical acts or media, and certain phenomena (prior to their explanation) in philosophy. Uses in Matthew - Matt. 8:10; Matt. 8:27; Matt. 9:33; Matt. 15:31; Matt. 21:20; Matt. 22:22; Matt. 27:14;

**Restored** (5199) (**hugies** which is the root of **hugiaino**; English = **hygiene, hygienic**) literally refers to being physically (and mentally) well or sound (emphasizes the absence of disease, weakness, or malfunction), healthy (implies full strength and vigor as well as freedom from signs of disease). **Hugies** describes that which balanced and ordered throughout. Hugies was used figuratively to describe speech which was uncorrupted, correct, accurate, balanced and ordered throughout, in addition to speech which is useful and beneficial. Health implies a proper balance of the whole.

**And they glorified (doxazo) the God of Israel** - This is a good response but it is too bad they did not recognize Jesus as the **God of Israel**, which He was in the flesh!

Broadus - "In Mt 9:8 it is simply 'and they glorified God.' But it was natural to mention that these heathen people glorified 'the God of Israel.'"

**MacArthur** - The wonder of these Gentiles was greater than the wonder of the Jews, whose awe was often tempered by spiritual pride and skepticism. When the crowd at Decapolis saw the perfection of the healings, they knew the power behind them was divine—in great contrast to the Pharisees who charged Jesus with casting out demons by Satan's power (Matt. 12:24). Knowing that their pagan gods could not perform such marvels, and would not have been inclined to perform them if they could, the people from Decapolis glorified the God of Israel. They were not fully aware of who Jesus was, but they knew He was a Jew and that He served the God of Israel, and they glorified His God in praise and reverent fear. Their excitement and gratitude over being healed or seeing their loved ones and friends healed made them spontaneously praise the Lord. (MNTC- Mt)

**Matthew 15:32** And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people, because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."

NET Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called the disciples and said, "I have compassion on the crowd, because they have already been here with me three days and they have nothing to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry since they may faint on the way."

NLT Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples and told them, "I feel sorry for these people. They have been here with me for three days, and they have nothing left to eat. I don't want to send them away hungry, or they will faint along the way."

ESV Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion on the crowd because they have been with me now three days and have nothing to eat. And I am unwilling to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way."

NIV Matthew 15:32 Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way."

GNT Matthew 15:32 ὁ ἰησοῦς προσκαλεσάμενος τοὺς μαθητὰς εἶπεν, Σπλαγγνίζομαι πρὸς τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ὅτι ἤδη ἔσονται μετὰ μου ἄρτον οὐκ ἔχουσιν· καὶ οὐ θέλω ἀποστείλαι αὐτοὺς ἄρτον οὐκ ἔχοντας, ἵνα κενώσιν τὸν ὄνυχον.

KJV Matthew 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples unto him, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

- **Jesus:** Mt 9:36 14:14 20:34 Mk 8:1,2 9:22 Lu 7:13
- **I feel:** Heb 4:15
- **three:** Mt 12:40 27:63 Ac 27:33
- **and have:** Mt 6:32,33 Lu 12:29,30
- **for they might faint:** 1Sa 14:28-31 30:11,12 Mk 8:3
- **[Matthew 15 Resources](#)** - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 8:1-10+ In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus called His disciples and \*said to them, 2 "I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat.

### THREE DAYS OF BEING FED THE BREAD OF LIFE

**And Jesus called His disciples to Him, and said, "I feel compassion for the people-** In Mt 9:36 and Mt 14:14 Matthew says Jesus felt compassion, but here Jesus Himself states His deep feeling for the masses of people. He is the same today (Hebrews 13:8). Here Jesus had compassion not just for their spiritual needs but their physical needs (not just healing, but feeding).

Our English word **compassion** is from Latin and means to suffer with and as one source has said is "a feeling of deep sympathy and sorrow, accompanied by a strong desire to alleviate the pain and remove its cause."

**Feel compassion** (4697) (**splanchnizomai** from **splagchnon** = bowel, viscera - see **splagchnon** note below) means to experience a deep visceral feeling for someone, to feel compassion for, to feel **sympathy**, to take **pity** on someone. **Compassion** is the sympathetic consciousness of others' distress together with a desire to alleviate it. This verb expresses an outward flow of one's life in contrast to our natural tendency toward self centeredness. It is notable that 8/12 NT uses describe this deep seated emotion in Jesus. It follows that if we desire to imitate Jesus, we need to be men and women of deep compassion! 12x in NT - Matt. 9:36; Matt. 14:14; Matt. 15:32; Matt. 18:27; Matt. 20:34; Mk. 1:41; Mk. 6:34; Mk. 8:2; Mk. 9:22; Lk. 7:13; Lk. 10:33; Lk. 15:20

**THOUGHT** - Obviously the multitudes greatest need was spiritual food, but we see Jesus' compassion specifically directed to their physical needs. This is a good lesson for us to remember, for compassionate deeds may open doors for giving out the Gospel to address spiritual needs.

**because** - Term of explanation. Explains why Jesus felt compassion.

**they have remained with Me now three days and have nothing to eat** - Jesus was quite the preacher to keep them listening for 3 days! "They had no doubt brought some food with them, which was now exhausted. They showed great zeal to see and hear and be healed, remaining so long in the thinly inhabited region, sleeping on the ground two nights in the open air, living on the food brought with them, and slow to leave when it was gone." (Broadus)

**Brian Bell** - Why is He doing this miracle again? A different crowd (Gentiles). Compassion on them. Also, Does yesterday's miracle necessarily guarantee today's faith? (no it doesn't) And as they say, Repetition is the mother of all learning! So, Why is He doing this miracle again? He wants the disciples and you & I to understand...He is the Bread of Life - John 6:48-51. He wants the disciples and you & I to understand...He was not just the Bread for the Jews, but also for the Gentiles. He wants the disciples and you & I to understand...His supply always meets and exceeds the demand. Our souls, so to speak, are *elastic*. The more we eat the more they expand. The more they expand, the more we are able to eat. Christ did not break the bread, so that suddenly there were huge piles of bread and fish. Rather, He kept breaking it & handing out what was needed bit by bit. We need to be constantly bringing our needs to Jesus, and He will constantly break the bread and give us what we need. Whatever God has given us, there is still far more for Him to give us.

**Vincent** - two verbs are used: the verb I will expressing Jesus' feeling or disposition. The Greek order is, and to send them away fasting I am not willing. Therefore Rev. is better: I would not.

**and I do not want to send them away hungry - Want** (present tense = "I am not willing") is [thelo](#) which primarily refers to exercising of one's will with the underlying sense of to be willing, to desire, to want or to wish. **Vine** says [thelo](#) "expresses not simply a desire, but a determined and constant exercise of the will." **Wuest** adds [thelo](#) expresses "a desire that comes from one's emotions" in this case Jesus' [splanchnizomai](#).

**For** Term of explanation. Explains why He does not want to send them away.

**They might faint on the way** - NIV = "they may collapse on the way." Literally., be unstrung or relaxed. (Vincent)

**Faint** (1590)([ekluo](#) from **ek** = out or intensifier + **luo** = to loose) means literally to loosen out and so to be unstrung (secular use = to unstring a bow) and so ""to have one's strength relaxed" (Thayer). Even as a bowstring goes limp when unstrung, the people would also go limp. To relax effort. To be without strength, extremely weary, exhausted in strength, ready to give out. [Ekluo](#) was used to describe reapers who had been overcome by heat and toil. Used 5x in NT - Mt. 15:32; Mk. 8:3; Gal. 6:9; Heb. 12:3; Heb. 12:5

#### Related Resources:

- Alfred Edersheim - [The Feeding of the Four Thousand](#)

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#### WARNING AGAINST ERROR Matthew 15:32–39; 16:1–12 - Croft Pentz

##### I. The feeding—Matthew 15:32–39

A. Devotion—Matthew 15:32. The people had been with Jesus for "three days." They were hungry and had nothing to eat. Jesus loved them and couldn't send them away hungry.

B. Doubt—Matthew 15:33. The disciples had no faith that Christ could feed all these people. They forgot how he had fed the five thousand (Matt. 14:16–21). (This is a different story, as the details prove.) Do not look upon circumstances; look to God in faith.

C. Demand—Matthew 15:34–35. They had seven loaves and a few fish. Jesus told the disciples to have the people sit down.

D. Distribution—vv. 36–39. Jesus took the seven loaves and few fish, and fed four thousand men besides women and children.

God can take little and make much from it.

##### II. The faithless—Matthew 16:1–4

A. Seeking—Matthew 15:1–2.

People wanted to see miracles before they would believe. They really wanted to be entertained.

B. Sin—Matthew 15:3. The people knew the signs of the weather, but they could not understand the signs of the times. Often the more worldly knowledge a man gains as he studies, the less he depends on God, and the less he understands about God.

C. Sign—Matthew 15:4. Again Christ speaks of the sign of Jonah. As Jonah was in the fish for three days, so Christ would be in the grave for three days before He would arise.

The things of God are simple so that believers can understand, but educated nonbelievers stumble over them. Some try to reason with God, while others use logic. When you come to God you must accept Him by faith. You don't have to understand all things.

##### III. The forgetting—Matthew 16:5–12

A. The forgetting—Matthew 15:5–6. The disciples forgot to take bread with them. As these disciples forgot to take food, many forget to take spiritual food (reading the Bible and praying daily).

B. The faithless—Matthew 15:7–10. They forgot how Jesus had fed the five thousand and four thousand. How easy it is to forget God's blessings! So many pray for God's blessings, then when God does bless them, they soon forget and seldom praise Him.

C. The false followers—Matthew 15:11–12. The Pharisees and Sadducees were teaching a false religion. Jesus warns us to be careful of these groups.

**Matthew 15:33 The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?"**

NET Matthew 15:33 The disciples said to him, "Where can we get enough bread in this desolate place to satisfy so great a crowd?"

NLT Matthew 15:33 The disciples replied, "Where would we get enough food here in the wilderness for such a huge crowd?"

ESV Matthew 15:33 And the disciples said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in such a desolate place to feed so great a crowd?"

NIV Matthew 15:33 His disciples answered, "Where could we get enough bread in this remote place to feed such a crowd?"

GNT Matthew 15:33 κα λ γουσιν ατ ο μαθητα, Πθεν μ ν ν ρημ ρτοι τοσο τοι στε χορτσαι χλον τοσο τον;

KJV Matthew 15:33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

- **Where:** Nu 11:21,22 2Ki 4:42-44 Mk 6:37 8:4,5 Joh 6:5-7
- **satisfy:** Mt 14:15 Lu 9:13 Joh 6:8,9
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 8:4+ And His disciples answered Him, "Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?"

### SHORT TERM MEMORY LOSS!

**Brian Bell** - Had they forgot about the 5000? - Well, we do! Hasn't God taken care of a bill of \$200 for you, & yet we get anxious over the next one for \$100?

**The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd-** Desolate place is *eremia* describing an "uninhabited or lonely region, normally with sparse vegetation." (4x in NT - Mt 15:33; Mk 8:4; 2 Co 11:26; Heb 11:38) (BDAG)

**Ken Gire** said, "Miracles are the common currency of heaven. The feeding of the 4000 was just a little loose change spilling from a hole in its pocket."

**Broadus** on **desolate place** "or a desert place, a wild country with few inhabitants, see on Mt 14:13 and Mt 3:1. Only a region containing large towns could at short notice furnish food for such a multitude, and this wild country was a good many miles from the nearest cities of Decapolis."

**Robertson** - It seems strange that they should so soon have forgotten the feeding of the five thousand (Mt. 14:13–21+), but they did. Soon Jesus will remind them of both these demonstrations of his power (Mt 16:9,10). They forgot both of them, not just one.

**MacArthur** has an interesting comment - Why did they not simply expect Jesus to perform a miracle like the one He had performed only a month or so earlier? They probably did. They could not possibly have forgotten the earlier occasion, especially since they were directly involved in distributing the food to some twenty-five thousand people as Jesus multiplied it. The reason for their question about where to find food seems to be that they were simply acknowledging again their own lack of resources. They were saying, in effect, "Lord we are no more able to feed this crowd by ourselves than we were able to feed the other one. This group is smaller, but four thousand men and their families are just as impossible for us to feed as five thousand."...The disciples did not doubt that Jesus could also miraculously feed this group; nor had they forgotten the previous feeding. (MACARTHUR IS CLEARLY CUTTING THE DISCIPLES SLACK AS WE SAY) The first idea is totally improbable and the second is impossible. Rather, their reply to Jesus emphasized that they knew the Lord could satisfy such a multitude but that they could not. He had no less power than before, and they had no more. (Ibid)

**Matthew 15:34 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish."**

NET Matthew 15:34 Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" They replied, "Seven— and a few small fish."

NLT Matthew 15:34 Jesus asked, "How much bread do you have?" They replied, "Seven loaves, and a few small fish."

ESV Matthew 15:34 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish."

NIV Matthew 15:34 "How many loaves do you have?" Jesus asked. "Seven," they replied, "and a few small fish."

GNT Matthew 15:34 κα λ γει α το ς η σο ς, Π σου ς ρ του ς χ ε τε; ο δ ε παν, π τ κα λ γ α χ θ δ ι α.

KJV Matthew 15:34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

- **How:** Mt 16:9,10
- **few:** Lu 24:41,42 Joh 21:9,10
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 8:5+ And He was asking them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven." 6 And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people. 7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well. 8 And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces. 9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away. 10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

**And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish."**- **Small fish** is "The diminutive form emphasizes the fact that the supply was meagre; in v. 36 it is the common word for 'fishes.' Here again the people are commanded to recline on the ground, and probably in companies and rows as before (Mark 6:39 f.), though nothing is here said of it." (Broadus)

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#### VAUGHAN. - How many loaves have ye?

Christ puts that question day by day to each one of us. There be many that say, "I have no work for Christ, and no mission. Mine is no lofty station, mine is no large sphere, mine is no eloquent tongue, or popular manner, or telling influence. It is too late for me—or perhaps, for the heart is versatile in its deceitfulness, it is too soon for me—to undertake anything for Christ; the King of Glory wants chief men, choice gifts, for His ministries: let me live out my little day and go back to the ground from which I was taken." Gravely, sorrowfully, yet earnestly and gently too, does Christ address Himself to you to-day, saying, "Think yet once more—how many loaves have ye?" Nothing? Not a soul? Not a body? Not time? Not one friend, not one neighbor, not one servant, to whom a kind word may be spoken, or a kind deed done, in the name, for the love of Jesus? Bring that—do that, say that—as what thou hast; very small, very trivial, very worthless, if thou wilt: yet remember the saying, "She hath done what she could."

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#### Matthew 15:35 And He directed the people to sit down on the ground;

NET Matthew 15:35 After instructing the crowd to sit down on the ground,

NLT Matthew 15:35 So Jesus told all the people to sit down on the ground.

ESV Matthew 15:35 And directing the crowd to sit down on the ground,

NIV Matthew 15:35 He told the crowd to sit down on the ground.

GNT Matthew 15:35 κα παραγγε λας τ χ λ να πε σε ν π τ υ γ ν

KJV Matthew 15:35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground.

- **sit:** Mt 14:19-21 Mk 6:39,40 Lu 9:14-16 Joh 6:10
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 8:6+ And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks

and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

**And He directed the people to sit down on the ground-** Notice there is no mention of "grass" as in Mt 14:19. This would support that the feeding of the 4000 was more likely midsummer, the grass would be parched and gone. The feeding of the 5000 had been on green grass (several months earlier in the Spring).

**Matthew 15:36 and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.**

NET Matthew 15:36 he took the seven loaves and the fish, and after giving thanks, he broke them and began giving them to the disciples, who then gave them to the crowds.

NLT Matthew 15:36 Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, thanked God for them, and broke them into pieces. He gave them to the disciples, who distributed the food to the crowd.

ESV Matthew 15:36 he took the seven loaves and the fish, and having given thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

NIV Matthew 15:36 Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people.

GNT Matthew 15:36 λαβεν το ς πτ ρους κα το ς χθ ας κα ε χαριστ σας κλασεν κα δ δου το ς μαθητα ς, ο δ μαθητα το ς χλοις.

KJV Matthew 15:36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake them, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

- **thanks:** Mt 26:26,27 1Sa 9:13 Lu 22:19 24:30 Joh 6:11 Ac 27:35 Ro 14:6 1Co 10:31 1Ti 4:3,4
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 8:6-7+ And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people. 7 They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He ordered these to be served as well.

**and He took the seven loaves and the fish; and giving thanks, He broke them and started giving them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people** - In Mark's version Jesus gives thanks twice. The verb **started giving** is in the [imperfect tense](#) picturing the pieces coming forth miraculously from His hand to one disciple after another.

**MacArthur** points out that Jesus used the disciples because He was teaching them "as well as feeding the multitudes. He wanted them to learn the practical as well as the theological reality of His compassion. He wanted them to participate first hand in God's concern for the daily needs of people as well as for their eternal redemption and physical wholeness, because divine compassion embraces every dimension of human need." (Ibid)

**Matthew 15:37 And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full.**

NET Matthew 15:37 They all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full.

NLT Matthew 15:37 They all ate as much as they wanted. Afterward, the disciples picked up seven large baskets of leftover food.

ESV Matthew 15:37 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up seven baskets full of the broken pieces left over.

NIV Matthew 15:37 They all ate and were satisfied. Afterward the disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

GNT Matthew 15:37 κα φαγον π ντες κα χορτ σθησαν. κα τ περισε ον τ ν κλασμ των ραν πτ στυρ δας πλ ρεις.

KJV Matthew 15:37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets full.

- **all:** Mt 15:33 14:20,21 Ps 107:9 Lu 1:53
- **seven:** Mt 16:9,10 Mk 8:8,9,19-21
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 8:8+ And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces. 9 About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

### WHEN JESUS SERVES ALL ARE SATISFIED!

**And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full-** In this case the number of baskets corresponds to the number of loaves; in the previous case (Mt 14:20+) to the number of apostles. Contrast these baskets with those in the miracle of the 5000 ([kophinos](#)) for the latter baskets were smaller and more akin to our lunch baskets. A little is always a lot (and more than enough) in the hands of the Creator!

Jesus was like my mother who used to say "Waste not, want not!" Jesus was teaching His men good stewardship. Christians should never be wasteful with the bounty Christ has bestowed on them.

**Were satisfied** (5526) ([chortazo](#) from **chortos** = fodder or grass or herbage of the field in general) means to feed with herbs, grass or hay and then to eat one's fill resulting in a state of being satisfied eat one's fill. **Chortazo** was used of the feeding of animals until they wanted nothing more. They were allowed to eat until they were completely satisfied. The picture is of animals who stayed at the feed trough until they wanted nothing more to eat. Thus **chortazo** means to to feed providing more than enough to satisfy. **Chortazo** is used figuratively by Jesus to refer to experiencing inward satisfaction, being fully satisfied or being content with some object or state (Mt 5:6+). Paul in describing how he came to learn the secret of spiritual nourishment in Christ wrote...

I know how to get along with humble means, and I also know how to live in prosperity; in any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of being filled and going hungry, both of having abundance and suffering need. (Php 4:12+)

**Large baskets** (4711)([spuris](#)) refers to large flexible baskets, large enough to hold a man (which they did in Acts 9:25!). All except Acts 9:25 describe the 7 baskets of left-over bread in feeding the 4000. Contrast the 12 baskets left over from feeding the 5000 in Mark 6:43, a different Greek word **kophinos**. In both Matthew and Mark when Jesus describes the feeding of 5000 and 4000, He uses these two words with the same distinction (Mark 8:19-20+.; Matt. 16:9-10+). **Spuris** - Matt. 15:37; Matt. 16:10; Mk. 8:8; Mk. 8:20; Acts 9:25. Not found in the Septuagint.

**Matthew 15:38 And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.**

NET Matthew 15:38 Not counting children and women, there were four thousand men who ate.

NLT Matthew 15:38 There were 4,000 men who were fed that day, in addition to all the women and children.

ESV Matthew 15:38 Those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children.

NIV Matthew 15:38 The number of those who ate was four thousand, besides women and children.

GNT Matthew 15:38 ο δ σθ οντες σαν τετρακισχ λιοι νδρες χωρ ς γυναικ ν κα παιδ ων.

KJV Matthew 15:38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## Related Passages:

Mark 8:9+ About four thousand were there; and He sent them away.

## JESUS FEEDS 4000 PLUS

**And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children - Besides women and children** is not mentioned by Mark. In other words there were probably in excess of 10,000 people. Matthew distinguished the number of men from women and children just as he had done in Mt 14:21. One wonders if this was the "accountant" in him (tax collector).

**Henry Morris** - Matthew 16:6-12 confirms that this was a second miraculous feeding of a multitude, and not an inadvertent repetition of the first, as some have charged. The word "thanks" occurs for the first time in the New Testament in Matthew 15:36, and significantly, it is on the lips of the Lord Jesus.

**Alfred Edersheim** observed that "the Lord ended each phase of His ministry with a feeding. He ended the ministry in Galilee with the feeding of the five thousand. He ended the ministry in the Gentile area with the feeding of the four thousand. And He ended the Judean ministry before His death on the cross with the feeding of His own in the upper room."

**Broadus** - This miracle is recorded both by Matthew and Mark, and the former miraculous feeding by all four of the Evangelists. And shortly after (16:9), we find it recorded both by Matt. and Mark that our Lord referred to the two miracles as separately teaching the same lesson. This conclusively shows that strikingly similar events did occur in our Lord's history, a thing to be remembered with reference to the two visits to Nazareth, the two instances of cleansing the temple, the two women who anointed Jesus, the parable of the pounds and that of the talents, etc, where it happens that the two events or discourses are recorded only by different Evangelists; and some expositors jump to the conclusion that they are nothing but varying and conflicting accounts of the same matter. If the feeding of five thousand with five loaves had been recorded only by one Gospel, and that of seven thousand with four loaves only by one or two others, it would have been most confidently asserted that these were the same miracle. Let us neither be nervous harmonizers, nor eager to assume that harmonizing is impossible. It is worth observing how natural in these two miracles are the points of agreement, and how striking are some of the differences. It was natural that the situation should in both cases be the wild country, where sufficient food could not be obtained from ordinary sources; that the kind of food multiplied should be that which was common on the shores of the lake; that Jesus should 'bless' or 'give thanks' before breaking the bread, according to custom, and should distribute the food by the help of the disciples, a matter of obvious convenience and propriety. On the other hand, the precise locality in the wild country is different in the two cases; there is now, in the parched summer, no mention of reclining on the grass, as Matthew, Mark, and John, all mention in the former case, when it was spring; the supply of food is here greater than before, while the number of persons is smaller; the people here have remained three days; in the other case only one day. **There is also a slight, but quite remarkable difference as to the word rendered 'basket.'** This is kophinos in all four Gospels in the first miracle, and spuris (or sphuris) in both Gospels here; and in the subsequent mention of these miracles (Mt 16:9 f.; Mark 8:19 f.) it is again in both Gospels kophinos with reference to the first, and spuris with reference to the second miracle. We do not know the precise difference between the two words, but the careful observance of the distinction throughout, strikingly shows how entirely distinct the two miracles were. Origen and Chrys. suppose that the spuris was somewhat large, and this seems confirmed by its use in lowering Paul from the wall of Damascus (Acts 9:25), while the kophinos appears to have been a small provision basket, such as a Jew on a journey commonly carried with him (see on Mt 14:20). The disciples may have now had these large baskets because they had been making a long journey.

The strange thing about this second miracle is the fact that the apostles do not refer (Mt 15:33) to the former miraculous feeding, which took place but a short time before. Many critics have thought this utterly inexplicable, and on this ground have denied the reality of the second miracle, though explicitly and repeatedly affirmed. But let us remember. Our Lord had sternly rebuked the crowd who shared in the previous feeding for following him the next day with the hope of being fed again (John 6:26), and had been much displeased at the popular determination produced by that miracle to make him a king. Nay, he had hurried the disciples themselves unwillingly away, partly, it is probable, because they sympathized with this popular design. (See on Mt 14:22.) In this state of things the disciples might naturally doubt whether he would repeat a miracle which had been formerly attended by such undesirable results, and might at any rate feel great delicacy about suggesting the idea that he should do so. (Comp. Mark 9:32, "were afraid to ask him.") But as soon as he intimates such an intention, by asking how many loaves they have, they express no surprise nor doubt, but go on to carry out the details.

## Feeding of the Multitudes

Feeding 5000 was recorded in all 4 Gospels, but the feeding of 4000 was recorded only in Mark and Matthew.

### Similarities:

- Both miracles involved huge crowds who were hungry
- Jesus used a small amount of bread and fish to feed a lot of people
- The disciples doubted the Lord's ability to provide but were also involved in distributing the food
- In both miracles, Jesus took the little they had, gave thanks, and multiplied it
- The crowds ate and were completely satisfied and a large amount of food was left over

### Differences:

- The first miracle involved feeding 5,000 compared to 4,000 here
- The amount of bread is different – 5 loaves versus 7 loaves
- The leftovers from the first miracle go in 12 small baskets and in the second, 7 large baskets are used
- There are two different Greek words - smaller baskets = [kophinos](#) and larger baskets = [spuris](#)
- The first meal came after a day of teaching and this one follows three days of teaching
- One prayer in the feeding of 5000, two prayers in feeding of 4000
- The first miracle took place among Jewish people and this one happens in the Decapolis, a Gentile community

Below is a chart adapted from Warren Wiersbe showing the differences;

Feeding 5,000	Feeding 4,000
Primarily Jews	Primarily Gentiles
Galilee, near Bethsaida	The Decapolis
5 loaves, 2 fish	7 loaves, "a few fish"
12 baskets over	7 baskets over
Crowd with Him 1 day	Crowd with Him 3 days
Spring of year (green grass)	Summer season
Tried to make Him King	No popular response

**NET Note** - Many commentators, on the basis of similarities between this account of the feeding of the multitude (Mk 8:1–10) and that in Mk 6:30–44, have argued that there is only one event referred to in both passages. While there are similarities in language and in the response of the disciples, there are also noticeable differences, including the different number present on each occasion (i.e., 5,000 in chap. 6 and 4,000 here). In the final analysis, the fact that Jesus refers to two distinct feedings in Mk 8:18–20 settles the issue; this passage represents another very similar incident to that recorded in 6:30–44.

**Hiebert** - Nineham asserts, "It is now generally accepted that we are dealing with alternative, and somewhat divergent accounts of a single incident." This critical conclusion of the liberal scholars is urged from the general similarities of the two accounts but especially from the dullness of the disciples as seen in Mk 8:4. The latter argument has some weight but is not insuperable. The obvious similarities are more than outweighed by the striking differences between the two events....The critical assumption is the concomitant of a low view of inspiration.

**Brooks** quips, "One might think that Mark and Matthew were in a better position than modern interpreters to know whether there was one or two. (PNTC-Mk)

**Matthew 15:39** And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan.

NET Matthew 15:39 After sending away the crowd, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

NLT Matthew 15:39 Then Jesus sent the people home, and he got into a boat and crossed over to the region of Magadan.

ESV Matthew 15:39 And after sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.

NIV Matthew 15:39 After Jesus had sent the crowd away, he got into the boat and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

GNT Matthew 15:39 Κα πολ σας το ς χλους ν βη ε ς τ πλο ον κα λθεν ε ς τ ρια Μαγαδ ν.

KJV Matthew 15:39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

- **sending away the crowds** Mt 14:22 Mk 8:10
- [Matthew 15 Resources](#) - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

#### Related Passages:

Mark 8:9-10+ About four thousand were there; and He sent them away. 10 And immediately He entered the boat with His disciples and came to the district of Dalmanutha.

Magadan on Western Side of Sea of Galilee

**And sending away ([apouo](#)) the crowds, Jesus got into the boat ([ploion](#)) and came to the region of Magadan** - Mark has "came to the district of Dalmanutha," which is thought to be in the vicinity of Magadan.

**Robertson** on **region of Magadan** - On the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee and so in Galilee again. Mark terms it Dalmanutha (8:10). Perhaps after all the same place as Magdala, as most manuscripts have it.

**Broadus** adds "The position of Magadan is unknown, as is that of Dalmanutha. (Mark 8:10.) They appear to have been on the western side of the lake, being reached by boat from the other side, and especially because from them the party crossed to the northeastern side. (16:5; Mark 8:13.)"

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#### John MacArthur has an excellent summary of this miraculous feeding in Gentile territory...

From Jesus' ministry to the Gentile crowd in the Decapolis a number of important lessons can be learned.

**First**, we see again Jesus' unrivaled divine power. Because only God can create, only God could have multiplied those seven loaves of bread and a few fish even one-fold, not to mention many thousand-fold. He is the God of Abraham, who believed in Him "who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist" (Rom. 4:17). Just as He had created healthy tissues to replace diseased ones, whole limbs to replace deformed and missing ones, and seeing eyes to replace blinded ones, He also created a superabundance of food to replace a little.

When the apostles were establishing the early church, many miracles were performed through them. But their miracles were performed in the name and by the power of Jesus Christ, for whom they served merely as instruments. Jesus, however, performed miracles in His own name and power, because He was the source of the power. He did not heal, deliver, raise the dead, and multiply food as God's agent but as God.

**Second**, the fact that He not only cured diseases and restored hearing and sight but restored those who were kullos (maimed and sometimes completely without arms, legs, eyes, or other parts of the body), He set Himself totally apart from self-proclaimed divine healers of past years and modern times. You look in vain among those healers for verified accounts of anyone who was given an arm, leg, or eye to replace one that was missing. Their "cures" are at best psychosomatic and are extremely minor compared to those the Lord performed during the three years of His earthly ministry. God is still capable of sovereignly healing the most hopeless disease and of creating new limbs where there are none. But the only age of healing in the church was the time of authenticating the Messiah Himself and of His Word through the apostles. Once those ends were accomplished, the gift of miracles ceased. (For a more complete discussion of this subject, see the author's book *The Charismatics*, published by Zondervan.)

**Third**, we learn that the goal of ministry is worship. Although most, if not all, of the multitudes in Decapolis were pagan Gentiles, when they saw the magnitude and perfection of Jesus' healing power, they not only were astonished beyond measure but also "glorified the God of Israel" (v. 31). Witnessing such a divine

display demanded much more than awe; it demanded reverential worship, which those Gentiles offered as best they knew how. Their worship was Jesus' supreme goal. He had unqualified compassion to heal their broken bodies and to fill their empty stomachs. But He was infinitely more concerned that, through their trust in Him as Lord and Savior, He could also save their souls from eternal damnation and make them citizens of His heavenly kingdom. Christ's followers are likewise called to minister not only to people's physical and temporal needs but to lead them to glorify God, "that the grace which is spreading to more and more people may cause the giving of thanks to abound to the glory of God" (2 Cor. 4:15). The goal of evangelism and of Christian living is to "worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers" (John 4:23). Only when devotion to the Lord is sincere and unqualified, service to others truly selfless, and daily living consistently Christlike, will God be glorified. That is an especially important lesson for our day, in which self-love and self-satisfaction have become accepted and touted even in much of the church. We are tempted to offer the gospel simply for what it can do for a person, with no suggestion of the need to turn from self to God and from our own priorities to His. We like to make the way of salvation seem wide, although the Lord says it is narrow (Matt. 7:14). We want to make the Christian life appear easy, although Jesus declared that "he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" and that only "he who has lost his life for My sake shall find it" (10:38–39).

**Fourth**, this story teaches the necessity of relying on divine resources. Like the disciples, we are most usable to the Lord when we acknowledge our own lack of resources and turn to Him. Whatever we may have in ourselves is never enough to meet the needs of others or to accomplish anything for God. Jesus did not command the apostles to be His "witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth" until He had first promised, "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8). "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights," James says (James 1:17). I was once asked to visit a elderly lady who was dying and did not know Christ. She was frail and sick, and I did not want to upset her; yet I knew that above everything else she needed Christ. All the way over there I prayed that God would help me know what to say and how to say it; but as I neared her apartment door I became more and more uneasy. When one of her friends let me in and I walked over to her bed, the first thing she said was, "Before you say anything, I just want to tell you that yesterday my sister led me to Christ." After a time of reading some psalms and prayer, I said, "You don't need to fear death any more"; to which she replied, "Fear death? I don't fear death. I don't fear death at all." By the time our visit was over, I felt she had ministered to me more than I had to her. I had been totally inadequate to meet her needs; but as I went in dependence on our gracious Lord, I found He had already preceded me and made full provision.

**Fifth**, we learn from this story that God's resources are never diminished, much less exhausted, because He has an infinite capacity to create. He did not need the seven loaves and few fish in order to feed the multitude. He could just as easily have made the food from nothing, just as He created the world from nothing. He used the loaves and fish in order to involve the disciples and to help teach them to give what they had into His care. "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return" (Luke 6:38). God's people would never lack resources to do what He calls them to do if they trusted that promise.

**Sixth**, we learn about the servant's usefulness. Although the Lord is able do His work without us, He chooses to do it through us. He did not need the disciples' help to distribute the food any more than he needed the seven loaves and the fish to make the food. He could have done in an instant what took them several hours to do. But in His infinite wisdom and mercy God chooses to use human instruments to do His divine work of carrying the gospel to the world and of ministering to its needs. In submissively serving others in our Lord's name and power, we learn to serve Him—in preparation for serving Him for all eternity in dimensions we cannot now conceive.

**Seventh**, we learn that God gives liberally, in "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over" (Luke 6:38), as we have already seen. Everyone on the mountainside ate until he was completely satisfied. There was even more than enough, so that seven large baskets of food were left over.

**Eighth** is the lesson of spiritual investment. When the disciples gave all they had to Jesus and then helped Him give it away to others, they had seven full baskets remaining for themselves. "He who sows sparingly shall also reap sparingly; and he who sows bountifully shall also reap bountifully" (2 Cor. 9:6).

The **ninth** and overarching lesson is the limitless compassion of Jesus Christ. He has compassion for all our needs—eternal, lifetime, and daily. He has compassion on Jews and on Gentiles, on the severely afflicted and

the merely hungry. Following the example of our Lord, we are to “do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of the faith” (Gal. 6:10). Our compassion is not measured by our feelings but by our giving.

John Wanamaker, founder of the famous Philadelphia department store that bears his name, was a devoted Christian. On a trip to China to observe Christian mission work there, he came across a small village where a group of Christians had begun building a church but lacked money to complete it. In a nearby field he noticed the strange sight of a boy yoked together with an ox as they together pulled a plow held by his father. Mr. Wanamaker’s guide explained that the boy had promised his father, “If you will sell one of the oxen and give the money for the building of the church, I will take the oxen’s place pulling the plow” Mr. Wanamaker is said to have fallen to his knees and said, “Lord, let me be hitched to a plow that I may know the joy of sacrificial giving.