

## Episode #818 Matthew 15 Part 2-Not a Word

I. The purpose of the gospel of Matthew is to present Jesus as the Christ, the King of Israel. It is another grand treatise like John to prove to Israel Who Jesus really is. It is the book of being “in Israel,” in contrast to believers today who are “in Christ.”

II. When the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem complained to the Lord that His disciples did not follow their tradition of ceremonially washing their hands before eating, the Lord accused them of transgressing God’s commands by their traditions. Now, He explains to them the reality of true defilement in the sight of God.

III. True Defilement. Matthew 15:10-20.

A. Review verses 10-11.

B. Verse 12. “Approached” is again *proserchomai*, as to a king. “Offended” is the Greek *skandalizo*, scandalized. This was not the way to get ahead in the society of Israel. The disciples think like most in Israel: these Pharisees are the high and mighty religious leaders, and should be honored and catered to. He said in Matthew 11:6 that those who are not scandalized in Him are blessed. These Pharisees are not!

C. Verse 13. In the Lord’s view, these Pharisees were not the great, religious elite, but simply plants that His heavenly Father had not planted or put in their positions. They showed this by being scandalized by Him. Rooting up is like the tares among the wheat in Matthew 13:29. The wheat, He warned, should not be rooted up, so these men were not wheat. The wicked are said to be plucked up by the roots in Jude 1:12.

D. Verse 14. A humorous picture. Imagine a blind man acting as guide for another blind man! Yet that is precisely what these Pharisees were in the things of God.

E. Verse 15. It really should have been clear, as the Lord chides him in the next verse. This is the question they all asked regarding the tares in the field, which was hard.

F. Verse 16. The disciples by now should have learned more wisdom than this. Probably they just had not thought about it. They were so concerned about the Lord offending these powerful leaders that they did not want to think about it

G. Verse 17. By His answer, the Lord reveals which parable Peter was referring to, though this was unclear from his question. Of course, the Lord knew which parable he meant without Peter having to be clear. “Is eliminated” is the *New King James’* rather prudish way of translating “and is cast out into the toilet.” In other words, God has given man a digestive process that cleanses all food.

H. Verse 18. The Lord illustrates what defiling things are from the heart in the next verse. These make a man truly unclean in God’s sight, as opposed to the things which make ceremonially unclean according to the law. Yet eating with unwashed hands did not even do that, except in the minds of the Pharisees. The “heart” is not the seat of emotions, but of the “real you deep down inside.” Man is *anthropos*, a person.

I. Verse 19. “Evil thoughts” includes reasoning and purposing or motivations. “Fornications” is *porneia*, from which we get “pornography.” It indicates all kinds of deviant sexual behavior. Some argue that this means exclusively prostitution, but this seems to be wishful thinking. The man in I Corinthians 5:1 who had his father’s wife is called “fornication” or *porneia*. It seems very doubtful that he was paying her. This word is a catch-all for sexual sin. False testimony is what the chief priests, elders, and all the Sanhedrin sought against Jesus in Matthew 26:59. Blasphemies means speaking against something wrongfully. The worst form is against God.

- J. Verse 20. The Lord gives the proper perspective on this. How much more significant are the wicked acts of sinful men than something like eating with dirty hands!

#### IV. The Sheep and the Dogs. Matthew 15:21-28.

- A. Verse 21. They probably departed from the land of Gennesaret, where they arrived in 14:34. "Region" means the coasts or borderlands. A Gentile city; Christ did not enter, just came to the border. Tyre means "A Rock," a very important city in the days of David, destroyed by Alexander the Great, now much reduced in importance. Sidon was a lesser city associated with Tyre.
- B. Verse 22. Hard to say if she was one of the ancient Canaanite peoples Israel was supposed to destroy but didn't, or whether this term by now just meant a Gentile living in Israel. Remember, another Jesus (Joshua) gave one particular Canaanite woman a great blessing with Israel in Joshua 6:17 (Rahab the harlot). "Region" is a different word meaning "boundary-lands." An idea (Bullinger and others) says she did not address Him right as "Son of David," since a Canaanite had no right to call Him by this title. There is some truth to this, but that is not what He said in verse 24. We ought to go with His explanation. Her daughter was miserably demonized.
- C. Verse 23. He does not even speak to her, recognize her, or acknowledge her question in any way. He explains why He did this in verse 24. The disciples want Him to answer her decisively one way or the other, rather than saying nothing. She was following them, crying out for help, and they were sick of it.
- D. Verse 24. His answer to His disciples. This was why He did not speak, not because she did not address Him right. This was still a statement to His disciples, not to her, so she could not have faith in this word. She needed a personal word to her before she could have faith, Romans 10:17.

V. Conclusion: The disciples were upset that their Lord offended the religious leaders, but He assured them that they were blind and ought not to be followed. It is not what goes into the mouth that truly defiles, but the wicked things that come out of the mouth and the life that show defilement in the heart. A Gentile woman came to the Lord for healing for her daughter, but He answered her not a word. His mission, He revealed, was not to Gentiles, but the house of Israel. Do we believe this word? We will consider this question more in our next study.