

The Gospel of Matthew

Booklet 17 – Three Lessons

Lesson 46 - Matthew 15:1- 20

Lesson 47 – Lesson 48 - Matthew 15: 21-28

Matthew 15: 29-39



The Lame or Cruppled

International ESL/Bible Lessons

Intermediate to Advanced Level

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Much of the material in these lessons come from *The Gospel of Matthew, Vol. I*, by William Barclay. Daily Study Bible Series. Other content comes from Bible Commentaries, Dictionaries and on-line sources. All pictures are from Google Images.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Material for this section is from William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew: The Daily Study Bible Series*. The Westminster Press. Philadelphia. 1975. Matthew's Gospel is carefully designed.

Section One includes The Genealogy of Jesus, The Birth Story, The John the Baptist Sequences, Baptism and Temptation of Jesus.

Section Two, from Chapters 5-7 is The Sermon on the Mount, or the Teachings of Jesus. These are gathered into a group from all the time of Jesus's ministry. These are the *words* of Jesus.

Section Three shows the actions or *doings* of Jesus.

Chapter 8 shows the Miracles of Jesus.

Chapter 9 shows the growing opposition to Jesus

Chapter 10 shows the choosing of Disciples and sending them out

Chapters 11 and 12 show Jesus working with the people and incurring the wrath of the Pharisees.

Chapter 12 indicates crucial decisions made by Jewish leaders: to bring about the death of Jesus.

Chapter 13 has Jesus teaching outside the Synagogue and in parables.

Chapter 14 describes the death of John the Baptist and the reaction of Jesus.

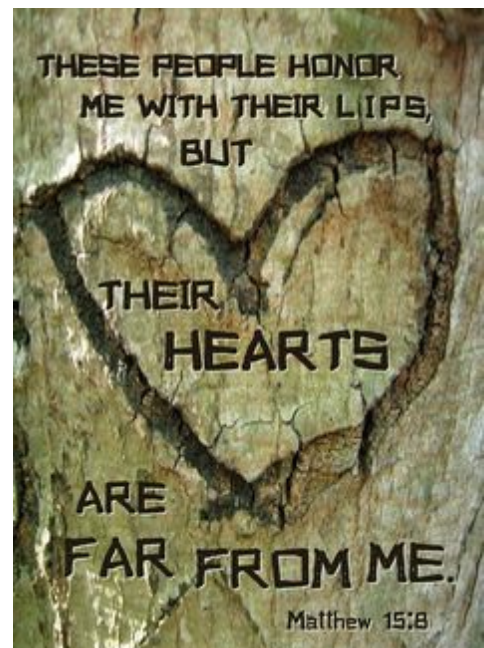
Chapter 15 represents a head-on clash between the Jewish religious leaders, the orthodox lawyers, scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 46 - Matthew 15:1-20 That Which Defiles

15 Then / some Pharisees and teachers of the law / came to Jesus from Jerusalem / and asked, / ² “Why do your disciples / break the tradition of the elders? / They don’t wash their hands / before they eat!”

³ Jesus replied, / “And why do you break the command of God / for the sake of your tradition? / ⁴ For God said, / ‘Honor your father and mother’ / and / ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother / is to be put to death.’ / ⁵ But you say / that if anyone declares / that what might have been used / to help their father or mother / is ‘devoted to God,’ / ⁶ they are not to ‘honor their father or mother’ with it. / Thus / you nullify the word of God / for the sake of your tradition. / ⁷ You hypocrites! / Isaiah was right / when he prophesied about you:



⁸ ““These people honor me with their lips, / but their hearts are far from me.

⁹ They worship me in vain; / their teachings are merely human rules.” /

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him / and said, / “Listen and understand.
/ ¹¹ What goes into someone’s mouth / does not defile them, / but
what comes out of their mouth, / that is what defiles them.”

¹² Then the disciples came to him / and asked, / “Do you know / that
the Pharisees were offended / when they heard this?”

¹³ He replied, / “Every plant / that my heavenly Father has not
planted / will be pulled up by the roots. / ¹⁴ Leave them; / they are
blind guides. / If the blind / lead the blind, / both will fall into a pit.”

¹⁵ Peter said, / “Explain the
parable to us.”

¹⁶ “Are you still so dull?” / Jesus
asked them. / ¹⁷ “Don’t you see /
that whatever enters the mouth /
goes into the stomach / and then



/ out of the body? / ¹⁸ But the things / that come out of a person’s
mouth / come from the heart, / and these defile them. / ¹⁹ For out of
the heart / come evil thoughts— / murder, / adultery, / sexual
immorality, / theft, / false testimony, / slander. / ²⁰ These are what
defile a person; / but eating with unwashed hands / does not defile
them.”

Vocabulary

1. To curse: To swear, or to use a dirty or swear word. An evil prayer.
2. To nullify: to make something invalid. Reverse. Invalidate.
3. Hypocrite: Someone pretending high principles. A fraud. A phony.
4. To defile: to dishonor. To destroy the reputation of someone.
Defile (n.) A mountain pass or gorge.
5. To offend: Insult. Hurt someone's feelings.

Related Words

Adjective	Noun	Verb	Adverb
Null	Null and void Nullification	To nullify	
Hypocritical	Hypocrite		Hypocritically
	Defilement.	To defile	
Offensive	Offender	To offend	Offensively

Questions

1. What does it mean to be orthodox in your beliefs?
2. Why would the scribes and Pharisees go to Galilee to hear and watch Jesus?
3. How can we know if our hearts are clean?

4. How did the Pharisees get around the Fifth commandment to honor your father and mother?
5. According to Jesus, what is unclean coming from your mouth?
6. How does this answer in verses 16-20 do away with the strict eating oral laws of the Jews?
7. How does speaking evil hurt people?

Notes

1. There were about four sects among the Jews: Sadducees, Pharisees, Essenes, and Zealots. Perhaps there were more. The Sadducees were wealthy and connected to the ruling parties and often cooperating with Rome. The Pharisees were religious and believed in keeping the Torah and the Oral Laws. They believed in life after death according to Josephus the historian, himself a Pharisee.
2. *In the 1st century, / **scribes** and **Pharisees** were two largely distinct groups, / though presumably some scribes were Pharisees. / Scribes had knowledge of the law / and could draft legal documents / (contracts for marriage, divorce, loans, inheritance, mortgages, the sale of land, and the like). Every village had at least one scribe. Pharisees were members of a party / that believed in resurrection / and in following legal traditions/ that were ascribed not to the Bible / but to “the traditions of the fathers.” / Like the scribes, / they were*

also well-known legal experts: / hence the partial overlap of membership of the two groups. / It appears from subsequent rabbinic traditions, / however, / that most Pharisees were small landowners and traders, / not professional scribes.”

<http://www.britannica.com>

3. Jesus and the Pharisees had two very different views of religion. To the scribes and Pharisees, worship was ritual and obedience to strict laws; but to Jesus, worship was the clean heart and loving life. Here is the clash. So what is worship? For many, it is ritual and a priest and it carried out in very certain ways. For others, these are all externals.
4. William Temple writes, “To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God.”
5. The concept of *clean* and *unclean* is very important in this passage. Basically, this is not about hygiene. It is entirely a ceremonial matter. For a man to be clean / was for him to be in a state / where he might worship and approach God; / for him to be unclean / was for him to be in a state / where such a worship / and such an approach was impossible
6. This uncleanness was transferable; it was, so to speak, infectious. For instance, if a mouse touched an earthenware vessel, that vessel was

unclean and unless it was ritually washed and cleansed, everything put into it was unclean. The consequence was that anyone who touched that vessel, or who ate or drank from its contents became unclean; and in turn anyone who touched the person who had so become unclean also became unclean. (Barclay, pg. 110.)

7. This Oral Law of uncleanness told a man what he might eat, and what he might not eat. Many of the food laws are in Leviticus 11.

Jesus changed all this.

8. Jesus does not directly reply to the Pharisees. He gives an example of God's Commandment to honor one's father and mother. The Oral Law allows a man to ignore his parental obligations if he wants to dedicate all he owns to the religion. Jesus feels God's law far outweighs the Oral Law that finds loopholes around the commandments.
9. In explaining the situation of eating *Kosher*, Jesus says something totally startling. It does not matter what goes in your mouth, but what comes out. Again he says it is the state of your thoughts and your heart that matter to God.
10. "No wonder the Scribes and Pharisees were shocked! The very ground of their religion was cut from beneath their feet. This statement was not simply alarming; it was revolutionary. If Jesus was right, their whole theory of religion was wrong. They identified religion and pleasing God with the observing of rules and regulations

which had to do with cleanness and with uncleanness, with what a man ate and how he washed his hands before he ate it; Jesus identified religion with the state of a man's heart, and said bluntly that these Pharisaic and Scribal regulations had nothing to do with religion.

11. We have still not learned this lesson. To go to church regularly, to give liberally to the church, to be a member of a little reading circle are all external things. They are means toward religion, but they are not religion. Religion consists in personal relationships and in an attitude to God and our fellowmen.”

(William Barclay, p.118-119.)

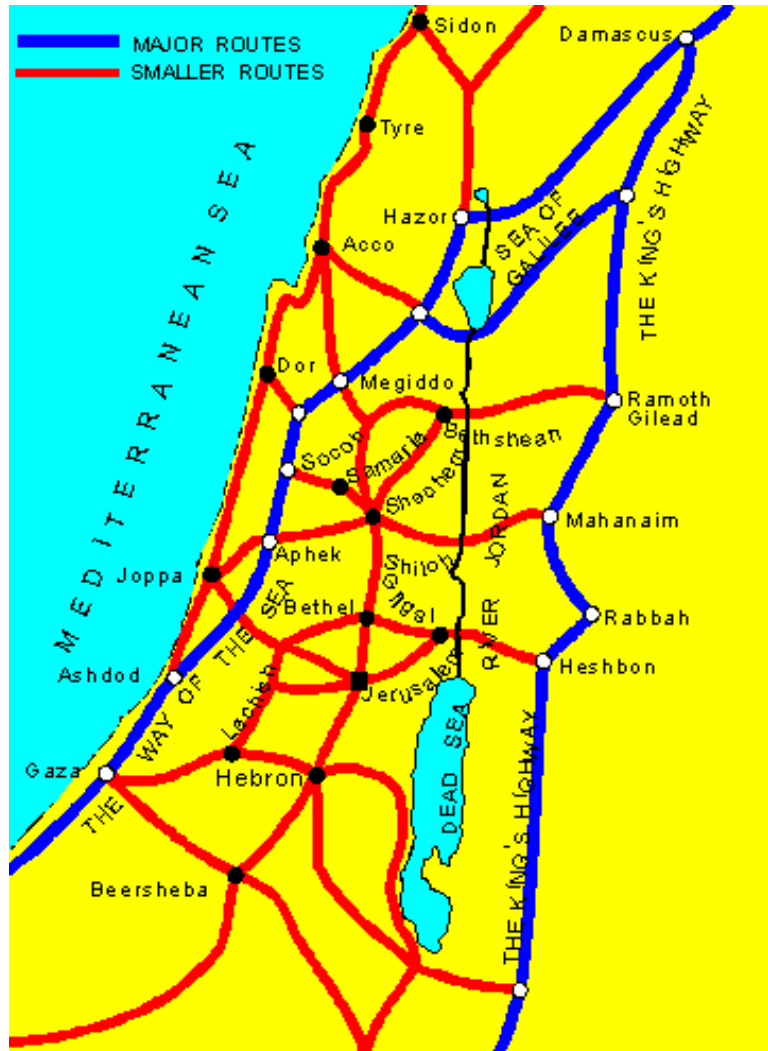
The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 47 - Matthew 15: 21-28 The Syrophoenician Woman

²¹ Leaving that place, /
Jesus withdrew to the
region of Tyre and Sidon.
/ ²² A Canaanite woman
/ from that vicinity came
to him, / crying out, /
“Lord, / Son of David, /
have mercy on me! / My
daughter is demon-
possessed / and
suffering terribly.” /
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.”

²⁴ He answered, / “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” /

²⁵ The woman came / and knelt before him. / “Lord, / help me!” /
she said.



²⁶ He replied, / “It is not right / to take the children’s bread / and
toss it to the dogs.”

²⁷ “Yes it is, / Lord,” / she said. / “Even the dogs eat the crumbs /
that fall from their master’s table.”/

²⁸ Then Jesus said to her, / “Woman, / you have great faith! / Your
request is granted.” / And her daughter was healed at that moment.

Vocabulary

1. Vicinity: The surrounding area or region. Neighborhood.
2. To kneel knelt, knelt: To get down on your knees.
2. Crumbs: Small pieces from bread or food. *“After eating, we wipe
the crumbs from the table.”*

Questions

1. Locate the regions of Tyre and Sidon.
2. How prejudiced were the Jews against the Canaanite people?
3. Why would Jesus leave Galilee and walk to Tyre and Sidon?
4. How many months do you think Jesus was gone from Galilee
teaching his disciples?
5. Why did Jesus heal the daughter of this persistent Canaanite?

Notes

1. Jesus decided to take a long, long trip to Tyre and Sidon. He
walked as far as we know. He walked along the highways that

were filled with travelers and Roman soldiers. The Bible gives no dates, but we know that this small band of travelers took months to travel.

2. Tyre and Sidon were located outside the areas controlled by Jews or by Herod. It was, of course, still conquered Roman territory. However it gave Jesus time alone with the disciples. This is the training often spoken about when we say Jesus went away to teach his disciples.
3. Jesus left for he was well known in Galilee and Judea, so he could have no respite from his healing and teaching of the people. They could find him anywhere. Also, he could get away from the criticisms of the Scribes (lawyers) and Pharisees. He really needed peace and rest with people he could trust.
4. His time to die was coming near, and Jesus needed to prepare his disciples for his death. This purpose was the reason for his days and months of walking and teaching.
5. This SyroPhoenician or Canaanite woman was a Gentile. Remember that Jesus is in the Gentile area. The Canaanites were the ancestral enemies of the Jews. Josephus, at the time of Jesus and afterward, writes that the Phoenicians and Tyrians have “the most ill-feelings toward us (the Jews.)” Prejudice shows its ugly face even with the disciples. They did not feel compassion for her.

6. We do not know how this woman had heard of Jesus, but she had. She continued to follow this little group and beg Jesus to help her daughter.
7. Perhaps Jesus was trying to awake faith in this persistent woman. Many writers comment on the tone with which Jesus spoke to her. It can sound like banter or teasing, for she answers his well in this way.
8. Dogs were hated and dangerous in that time. They roamed in dog packs and lived on rubbish and trash. The word Jesus uses for dogs is not that for pariah dogs, but for puppies. Many Greek and Romans kept pet dogs, something no Jew would do at that time. So, the woman could gain the attention and favor of Jesus with her wit and persistence.
9. Also, note that the woman began by calling him, Son of David, a political title, but ended with calling him Lord. She did grow in faith.
10. In this story, Matthew again shows that the Gospel of Jesus is for all the people of the world, not just the Jews. Jesus walked outside the Jewish territory and into the Gentile lives of people. This foreshadows the Gospel going into the entire world and is the beginning of the end of barriers of territory and prejudice.

The Gospel Of Matthew

Lesson 48 - Matthew 15: 29-39 Jesus Feeds the Four Thousand

²⁹ Jesus left there / and went along the Sea of Galilee. / Then / he went up on a mountainside / and sat down. / 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.

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.

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.”

³³ His disciples answered, / “Where could we get enough bread / in this remote place / to feed such a crowd?”

³⁴ “How many loaves do you have?” / Jesus asked. /

“Seven,” / they replied, / “and a few small fish.”

³⁵ He told the crowd / to sit down on the ground. / 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. ³⁷ They all ate and were satisfied. / Afterward / the

disciples picked up seven basketfuls / of broken pieces / that were left over. / ³⁸ The number / of those who ate / was four thousand men, / besides women and children. ³⁹ After Jesus had sent the crowd away, / he got into the boat / and went to the vicinity of Magadan.

Vocabulary

1. **Lame:** Walking unevenly. Unconvincing, as in a lame excuse.
2. **Crippled:** Unable to walk. To have impaired functioning or progress. Offensive term.
3. **Collapse:** Fall down. Suddenly sit or lie down.

Questions

1. How is the feeding of the 4,000 different from the 5,000 found in Matthew 14?
2. How many days did the people stay with Jesus?
3. Why would Jesus feed and heal Gentiles?
4. Describe this journey of Jesus and the disciples into Gentile lands.
5. In what country can you find Tyre and Sidon located in 2014?

Notes

1. Jesus and his disciples continue on their walking, teaching, learning journey in Tyre, Sidon and the 10 Greek cities of the

Decapolis. Mark 7:31 also tells this story. It says Jesus went from Tyre through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, traveling through the region of the Decapolis.

2. Barclay tells us that “this was s strange way of traveling. Sidon is north of Tyre, the Sea of Galilee is south of Tyre, and the Decapolis was a confederation of ten Greek cities on the east of the sea of Galilee. That tells us that Jesus went north in order to go south.
3. It is clear that Jesus deliberately lengthened out this journey to have as long as possible with his disciples before the last journey to Jerusalem.” (Barclay, pg. 125.)
4. Obviously this journey took Jesus and the disciples over six months. During this time Jesus deliberately taught and instructed them. We have few stories about this special time.
5. The feeding of the four thousand happened in the Decapolis. That was obviously on Gentile territory. It is very different from the feeding of the five thousand that we studied in chapter 14.
6. Many differences can be found:
 - This time was summer, for the people sat on the dusty, bare earth. Before it was spring and the grass was green.
 - This time the people were mostly or all Gentile, for they were in Gentile territory.

- They glorified the *God of Israel*. That is unusual phrasing, for many people thought the gods were local and attached only to one location. The God of Israel was the God of the Jews.

- The words used for the baskets were different. The word for the feeding of the 5,000 was *kophinoi*. That was a typical Jewish basket for traveling and was



- narrow-necked and flask shaped. Sort of a Jewish basket
- The word used for the feeding of the 4,000 was *sphurides*, and it was shaped like a “picnic” basket that came in many sizes.

7. From Barclay, pg. 127: “In writing this passage Edersheim has a lovely



- thought: he points out that in three successive stages of his ministry, Jesus ended each stage by setting a meal before his people.
8. First, there was the feeding of the five thousand; that it came at the end of his ministry in Galilee, for Jesus was never to teach and heal in Galilee again.

9. Second, there was this feeding of the four thousand. This came at the end of his brief ministry to the Gentiles, beyond the bounds of Palestine — first in the districts of Tyre and Sidon and then in the Decapolis.
10. Third and last, there was the Last Supper in Jerusalem, when Jesus came to the final stage of the days of his flesh.

Notes: Edersheim: *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.