

31: *Inside Out* (Matthew 15:1-28)

Many of us look like we have it all together on the *outside* while what's on the *inside* tells a different story. Today we are challenged by Jesus to take an honest look *INSIDE OUT* and see if we are *His* or if we are *Hypocrites*.

beourguest

Thanks so much for joining us today! Please register with our **CONNECT CARD**.

- Use our **WI-FI: *Worship Center Guest***



getourapp

Download our **CHURCH APP** for sermons & notes, ways to connect, upcoming events, online giving, & more.

teachingnotes

Breaking Tradition

Matthew 15:1-3 (NIV) Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!" Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?"

Why had these leaders come all the way from **Jerusalem** - a trip that takes several days? They first confront Jesus by asking why He let's his disciples get away with breaking **the tradition of the elders**. For example, **they don't wash their hands before they eat**. This wasn't just about making sure hands got clean. This was about ceremony, symbolism, & tradition - when to wash, what to wash, what to wash with.

The tradition of the elders were interpretations of the written Scriptures, sometimes particular commands given to a particular group of people, yet applied to ALL people. (The Scriptures do not command people to wash their hands before they eat.) Exodus 30:17-21 *DID* command the priests to wash their hands as they performed their priestly duties at the tabernacle and later temple. Notice: this was a lasting ordinance for Aaron and his sons - the priests, NOT the rest of the people.

Honoring Tradition & Disobeying Scripture

Matthew 15:4-6 (NIV) For **God said**, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.' But you say that if anyone declares that what might have been used to help their father or mother is 'devoted to God,' they are not to 'honor their father or mother' with it. Thus **you nullify the word of God** for the sake of your tradition.

The Scriptures say to **honor your father and mother** (Exodus 20:12; Deut. 5:16) and that **anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death** (Exodus 21:17; Lev. 20:9). But these religious leaders were teaching the people to **nullify the word of God** as written in the Scriptures in place of their **tradition** of making a vow **devoted to God**.

- The expression of a "gift devoted to God" comes from the Hebrew term *qorban* ("**Corban**" in Mark 7:11), a term referring to a pledge made to God with a gift supporting the temple's ministries upon one's death. These funds *could be used for a personal emergency*, but they *could not be used to help others like one's own parents*.¹

And that's how human **tradition** replaces **God's Word** as the authority over our lives.

❓ When **God's Word** and the **human tradition** collide, which will you recognize as being more authoritative in your life? *Will you bend your beliefs to fit the Bible or will you bend the Bible to fit your beliefs?*

✓ Christians must make sure that **God's Word outweighs & overrules Human Tradition**.

Hypocrites or His?

Matthew 15:7-9 (NIV)

You **hypocrites!** Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: "These people honor me with their lips, but **their hearts are far from me**. They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules." [Is 29:13]

BIG QUESTION: Would we be proven to be HYPOCRITES or HIS?

¹ Craig Blomberg, Matthew, vol. 22, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1992), 238.

Blind Guides

Matthew 15:10–14 (NIV) Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen and understand. What goes into someone’s mouth does not defile them, but what comes out of their mouth, that is what defiles them.” Then the disciples came to him and asked, “Do you know that **the Pharisees** were offended when they heard this?” He replied, “Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be **pulled up by the roots**. Leave them; **they are blind guides**. If the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.”

These religious leaders would have strongly objected since there were many foods that were considered unclean and commanded - by God - not to be eaten. This must have been a stick in the eye for Jesus’ religious foes, and the disciples of Jesus recognize that He is in deep weeds with them now.

Jesus is comparing these religious leaders to blind guides who are leading others **into a pit** of hell!

Inside Out

Matthew 15:15–20 (NIV) Peter said, “Explain the parable to us.” “Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But **the things that come out of a person’s mouth come from the heart**, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. **These are what defile a person**; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”

Mark’s gospel here makes the comment that by saying this that “In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.” (Mark 7:19) **When God says it’s now clean, it’s now clean!**

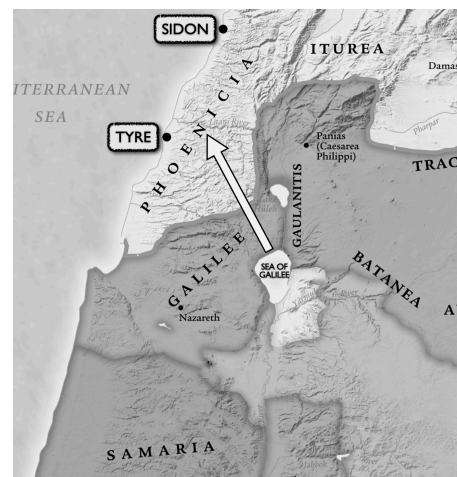
What makes a person sinful is what he/she does, says, and thinks - what comes out of a person.

A Strange Encounter

Matthew 15:21–23 (NIV) Leaving that place, Jesus withdrew to the region of Tyre and Sidon. 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.” 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.”

This **woman** is a **Canaanite**, not a Jew. To Jews she would be considered **unclean** - a pagan Gentile. In fact, Israel is the nation that had conquered her ancestors. Yet she calls Jesus “**Son of David**” - Jewish phrase for the Messiah who would come through the line of King **David**.

She has no doubt heard about the miracles Jesus has done and she has a HUGE favor to ask Jesus. She calls out for Jesus to **have mercy** on her - to take time to respond to her request. And that request is super significant, her **daughter is demon-possessed**.



Matthew 15:24–25 (NIV) He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” The woman came and kneled before him. “Lord, help me!” she said.

I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel. Jesus was the Jewish Messiah, the King of Israel. He was born into a Jewish family and most of His ministry was to Jewish people (Rm 1:16), but Jesus would ultimately send His Jewish disciples to make disciples of all nations (Mt 28:19–20), which is why we are followers of Jesus today!

Matthew 15:26–27 (NIV84) He replied, “It is not right to take the **children’s bread** and toss it to their dogs.” “Yes, Lord,” she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from **their masters’ table**.”

Jesus is not being racist or unkind to this desperate Gentile woman. Instead, this is a beautiful story that demonstrates how Jesus responds to those who seek Him.

Among 1st century Jews, **dogs** were often viewed as unclean animals that scavenged garbage dumps and even attacked people. But here Jesus refers to domesticated dogs. Though we care about our house pets, we wouldn’t give our **children’s food** to our **dogs** instead. Our children are our first priority. So too, the Jewish people (**children**) are the first priority of Jesus’ ministry, while the pagan Gentile nations - **dogs** - were not. Their time to hear the good news of Jesus would come, but the good news of Jesus was to go to the Jews first (Rm 1:16, Ac 3:26; 13:46).

This woman's focus is on Jesus as the Jewish Messiah, "**the Son of David**", the compassionate **Master** whom she asks to kick some crumbs off the table and help her daughter.

Matthew 15:28 (NIV) Then Jesus said to her, "Woman, **you have great faith!** Your request is granted." And her daughter was healed at that moment.

This Gentile woman with a daughter who has an unclean spirit has **great faith**, faith in Jesus.

BIG QUESTION: Would we be proven to be HYPOCRITES or HIS?

- The Jewish religious leaders who are super clean...on the OUTSIDE, but they stand against Jesus and refuse to recognize Him as the Jewish Messiah. They prove to be **HYPOCRITES** who say one thing and do another.
 - But **this Canaanite woman** - an unclean Gentile whom most Jews wouldn't talk to, proves to be **HIS** - a person who had a genuine faith in Jesus - the Jewish Messiah.
- ❓ **Which one are YOU?** If your life was turned **INSIDE OUT** and who you really are on the inside was seen on the outside, **would you be proven to be a HYPOCRITE or HIS?**

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156), **Mark & Dot Mancil** (850-253-5405), **Boss & Amelia Mulkey** (850-464-6717), or **Tom & Martha Waddail** (850-973-0011).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. **Read Matthew 15:1-9.** Discuss the significance of the complaints the religious leaders and Jesus have of each other. How is it possible for us to be "religious" and yet be far from God?
2. Why is it so important that God's Word outweighs & overrules Human Tradition? Share about a time when human tradition collided with the Word of God in your life. Explain if it was difficult or not to change your tradition or challenge another's tradition.
3. **Read Matthew 15:10-20.** How do our thoughts, words, actions, & attitudes show what is in our hearts?
4. **Read Matthew 15:21-27.** What stood out to you in the interaction between Jesus and the Canaanite woman?
5. How does our persistence in prayer show God's character? How persistent are you in your prayers to God?
6. What differences do you see between the religious leaders confronting Jesus and the Canaanite woman?
7. What challenged or encouraged you *most* from today's teaching?
8. What does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
9. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.