

DEFILEMENT AND HYPOCRISY

Quote:

But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Matthew 15:18-20

Matthew 15 - Mark the Chapter Breakdown

1. The Pharisees Criticise Jesus' Disciples - Matthew 15:1-2 (see Mk 7:1-5)
2. Christ's Answer: You Transgress. Case in Point: The Fifth Commandment - Matthew 15:3-6 (see Mk 7:9-13)
3. Worship Taught by Tradition is Vain - Matthew 15:7-9 (see Mk 7:6-8).
4. Public Repudiation of the Pharisees - Matthew 15:10-11 (see Mk 7:14-16)
5. Private Explanation - Matthew 15:12-20 (see Mk 7:17-23)
6. Christ Visits the Region of Tyre and Sidon - Matthew 15:21 (see Mk 7:24)
7. He Heals the Daughter of a Syrophenician Woman - Matthew 15:22-28 (see Mk 7:25-30)
8. Journey Through Decapolis where many were healed on a mountain top - Matthew 15:29-31 (see Mk 7:31-37)
9. Feeding the Four Thousand - Matthew 15:32-39 (see Mk 8:1-9)

Bible Marking - Matthew 15

Matthew 15:2 - **“tradition of the elders”** - The Jews considered their traditions to be the highest standard to be observed - above the Law of God. They bitterly condemned anyone who violated their traditions, and often overlooked the breaking of God's Law.

“Wash not their hands when they eat bread” - This was a ceremonial religious ritual of the Pharisees, which they required to be observed even though their hands or cups and plates were clean already. See **Jer 2:22; 4:14; Prov 30:12**. They failed to see that true washing cleanses the heart, as the foundation of a full cleansing of our way (**Isa 1:6-17**).

Matthew 15:3 - **“transgress the commandment of God”** - God only has the right to add to His Word. **Deut 18:18-19; 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:6; Rev 22:18-19**.

Matthew 15:4 - **“Honour thy father and mother”** - The 5th Commandment (**Deut 5:16**). This involved their care for them in their times of need.

“**Curseth**” - means to speak ill of, revile, abuse, but also to slight, or set light by. See **Ezek 22:7; Deut 27:16; Prov 20:20; 30:17**.

Matthew 15:5 - “**it is a gift**” - Under this tradition a person could make an offering (‘**corban**’ - **Mk 7:11**) of his possessions to the temple, but retain use of them during his lifetime. Once a person had willed his possessions in a corban-gift, they were accounted as no longer his, though he had use of them during the term of his life. Under this arrangement, they deemed he no longer had any right to use them to assist his parents.

Matthew 15:19 - See **Mk 7:21-22**. Sin involves thoughts, words and deeds. The heart is naturally evil (**Jer 17:9**), and therefore needs to be cleansed by the power of the Word.

“**out of the heart**” - See **Matt 12:35** - a heart cleansed by the Word brings forth good fruit.

Matthew 15:1-9 - Chiastic structure highlights the hypocrisy of the Jews who placed tradition above the 5th Commandment.

- A. **v1** ¶ Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,
v2 Why do thy disciples transgress the **tradition of the elders**? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.
- B. **v3** But he answered and said unto them, **Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?**
- C. **v4** For **God commanded**, saying, **Honour thy father and mother**: and, He that curseth **father or mother**, **let him die the death**.
- C. **v5** But **ye say**, Whosoever shall say to his **father or his mother**, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;
v6 And **honour not his father or his mother**, **he shall be free**.
- B. **Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.**
- A. **v7** Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,
v8 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
v9 But in vain they do worship me, **teaching for doctrines the commandments of men**.

The Syrophonician Woman (Mark above or below Matthew 15)

Though a Gentile by birth, was Israelite in Hope - **v27**

She had:

- A great need (**v22**).
- Great persistence (**v22** - **Mk 7:26** “besought” means ‘kept asking’).
- Great humility and understanding (**v27** - see **Ruth 2:14**).
- Great faith (**v28**)

She was persevering in her request, not deterred by delay and opposition (cp **Lk 18:1-8**) and thus received great benefit.