

Matthew 15

In the previous teach-in (No. 12) we looked at the fate of yet another prophet of God and we learnt that speaking God's word will sometimes get you into trouble, especially if it conflicts with the status quo, that is, things as they exist at the time.

In this chapter of Matthew we see that Jesus is once again in conflict with the religious leaders.

Matthew 15 v 1-14

Then some Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, 2 "Why do Your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." 3 And He answered and said to them, "Why do you yourselves transgress the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? 4 For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.' 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever I have that would help you has been given to God," 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. 7 You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy of you: 8 'This people honors Me with their lips, But their heart is far away from Me. 9 'But in vain do they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.'" 10 After Jesus called the crowd to Him, He said to them, "Hear and understand. 11 It is not what enters into the mouth that defiles the man, but what proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man." 12 Then the disciples came and said to Him, "Do You know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this statement?" 13 But He answered and said, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be uprooted. 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."

Washing the hands was a Mosaic law that the disciples were not observing; the Pharisees and Scribes are quick to point this out to Jesus and His response was to ask them another question. They had been legalistically making rules and regulations concerning external things, yet ignoring the more fundamental law of God, the fifth commandment. He accused them of paying lip service to their God.

Matthew 15 v 15-20

15 Peter said to Him, "Explain the parable to us. 16 Jesus said, "Are you still lacking in understanding also? 17 Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? 18 But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. 20 These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

Then Jesus makes another profound statement about the words that we speak
V 20 These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man."

The Pharisees did not like this, it cut right across what they traditionally practiced. His disciples didn't understand what Jesus meant and He goes on to explain, but disappointed that they had not understood. Food does not harm us, if taken with faith.

Mark 16 v 18

18 they will pick up serpents, and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

Romans 14 v 17-23

17 for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. 18 For he who in this way serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men. 19 So then we pursue the things which make for peace and the building up of one another. 20 Do not tear down the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are clean, but they are evil for the man who eats and gives offense. 21 It is good not to eat meat or to drink wine, or to do anything by which your brother stumbles. 22 The faith which you have, have as your own conviction before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. 23 But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

The warning is again given concerning our tongues, as in Matthew 12.

Matthew 12 V 33-37

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. 34 You brood of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak what is good? For the mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart. 35 The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil. 36 But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment. 37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Matthew 15 v 21-28

21 Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. 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." 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." 24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26 And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27 But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 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.

Jesus is pressurised by the Caananite woman, proving once again that He can be influenced by our strong faith. Her daughter is healed and Jesus commends her for her persistent faith.

Matthew 15 v 29-39

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." 33 The disciples said to Him, "Where would we get so many loaves in this desolate place to satisfy such a large crowd?" 34 And Jesus said to them, "How many loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few small fish." 35 And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; 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. 37 And they all ate and were satisfied, and they picked up what was left over of the broken pieces, seven large baskets full. 38 And those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. 39 And sending away the crowds, Jesus got into the boat and came to the region of Magadan.

Here we see in the final section that Jesus has kind heartedness for the crowds, He heals the sick and the lame and they worship God. For three days they listen to Him and witness many miracles of healing. Then, they were to experience yet another miracle, the feeding of the four thousand. The significance of this is that they used only what they had and it was enough, more than enough.

How much do I have of faith, time, money, etc.? Faith will grow when it is used and diminish when it is not used. Even what we have will disappear if we do not use it, but it has to be used to give to others and especially not just for my own use.