

The Life of Jesus Christ

Lesson 11 - In Galilee And Beyond

April 15, 2020

What defiles a man?
Matthew 15:1-21; Mark 7:1-24

Divine Commands versus Human Traditions

Matthew 15:1-21

What determines if a “tradition” is to be followed?

- Simple question: who established the tradition?
- God alone determines tradition to be followed. (Galatians 1:6-9)

Divine Commands versus Human Traditions

Matthew 15:1-21

The root of the problem: **the heart of man.** (verse 10)
Jesus explained that *“defilement”* isn’t from what goes in the mouth but by what comes out.

- Seeking **true purity.** (Mark 7:2, 5; Matthew 5:8; Matthew 23:26; 1 Thessalonians 4:7; 2 Timothy 2:22; James 4:8)

How is this achieved?

- *“Taking every thought captive ...”* (2 Corinthians 10:3-5)
- *“Gird the loins of your mind ...”* (1 Peter 1:13; ASV)
- *“Think on these things ...”* (Philippians 4:8)

Divine Commands versus Human Traditions

Matthew 15:1-21

Once again (John 6:61), Jesus’ teaching caused the Pharisees to be *“offended”* or **stumble.** (15:12; remember Luke 7:23)

- Jesus’ disciples wanted to know if He was aware ... almost suggesting He needed to appease them.

Divine Commands versus Human Traditions

Matthew 15:1-21

Jesus’ point in verse 13 is that all of the **Pharisaic traditions and “precepts of men” aren’t from God.** This wasn’t what God **planted.** (Think of the parable of the sower and tares in Matthew 13).

And if God didn’t plant these traditions and human doctrines, rest assured, they will be *“uprooted.”* (Think Matthew 24:1-3)

Divine Commands versus Human Traditions

Matthew 15:1-21

Jesus then states, *“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.”* (verse 14)

What did Jesus mean when He told His disciples to *“leave them alone”*?

- Are we not to correct those who teach false doctrines? (1 Timothy 1:3; 2 Timothy 2:25; 4:2)
 - In fact, Jesus had already spoken the truth and there was no need to seek to appease them or reconcile.
 - Once truth has been presented, we have done our duty, even if it offends. (Ezekiel 33:9; Matthew 10:14)
- “Pit”* – destruction and condemnation. (Psalms 40:1-2; 55:22-23; 103:4; 2 Peter 2:4)

Divine Commands versus Human Traditions

Matthew 15:1-21

Peter asked (perhaps for the 12) in verse 15 for an explanation of the “*parable*” (verses 10-11? verses 13-14?).

- Jesus’ response beginning in verse 17 would indicate He is responding to what He said in verses 10-11.

Jesus questions whether (or why) they were “*lacking in understanding also.*” (verse 16)

- “Without discernment” ^(Vine) Opposite of the ability to reason out, perceive, (and) understand.” ^(Zodhiates)

Purity and Defilement

Matthew 15:1-21

Jesus explains: “*Do you not understand that everything that goes into the mouth passes into the stomach, and is eliminated? But the things that proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and those defile the man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders. These are the things which defile the man; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the man.*” (verses 17-20; cf. James 3:6)

Commands versus Traditions

Matthew 15:1-21

Focus on the heart: it’s **where defilement begins and resides:**

- “*Evil thoughts*” (Luke 6:45)
- “*Murders*” (Matthew 5:21-22)
- “*Adulteries*” (Matthew 5:27-28)
- “*Fornications*” (1 Corinthians 6:18)
- “*Thefts*” (Ephesians 4:28)
- “*False witness*” (Ephesians 4:25)
- “*Slanders*” (Colossians 3:8)
- “*And things like these ...*” (Galatians 5:21)

“*These are the things which defile the man ...*” (verses 19-20; cf. Matthew 5:22, 28)

Purity and Defilement

Matthew 15:1-21

Defilement:

- “*But Daniel made up his mind that he would not defile himself with the king’s choice food or with the wine which he drank; so he sought permission from the commander of the officials that he might not defile himself.*” (Daniel 1:8)
- “*Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.*” (2 Corinthians 7:1)