

# MATTHEW 15:1-9

## LESSON: TEACHINGS ON JUSTICE—June 17, 2018

### INTRODUCTION:

**Matthew 14:33-36** The ordeal of Peter and Jesus walking on the water had just occurred. Afraid earlier of seeing Jesus walk on the water, they now began to worship Jesus acknowledging Him as the true Son of God. When they disciples finally crossed the sea, they came into the land of Gennesaret. Gennesaret was located on the west side of the Sea of Galilee in a fertile well-watered area. The men of that place became aware that Jesus was there and they began to send word to the surrounding regions, and many brought all that were ill and diseased to Him. They wanted to just touch the hem of His garment, "*and as many as touched were made perfectly whole!*" Jesus' presence brings healing! (14:33-36).

### LESSON: I. CONTROVERSY MATTHEW 15:1-2

**15:1** Then came to Jesus scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,—<sup>1</sup>The Scribes and Pharisees joined forces and sent a delegation from their religious center, Jerusalem to Galilee to investigate the ministry and teachings of Jesus and His disciples. They wanted to question Jesus in order to find fault with Him. However, this would be a trap for them and an opportunity for Jesus to reveal truth.

**15:2** Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. The charge against Jesus was that He broke tradition. The Jews of our Lord's time believed that, in addition to the written Law of Moses, there was an oral law given to Moses on Sinai and passed down from him by word of mouth till it reached the Great Synagogue or Council of Elders which succeeded Ezra after the return from exile. This council lasted till 291 B. C. and seems to have been the source of the many additions to the Law of God which have been found in Judaism ancient and modern.

They accused Jesus about His disciples failing to wash their hands before eating their meal. Therefore, the disciples had broken the tradition of the elders and embarrassed the religious faithful of their day. The washing consisted of pouring a trickle of cold water over the outstretched hands. The water had to then drip off of the wrists; otherwise the person's arms would become unclean. They were upset because their tradition taught that before every meal, hands were considered unclean and had to undergo a laborious ceremonial cleansing. The Jews were not concerned with cleanliness, but with their ritual. There are and always have been two religions in the world. There is the religion that stresses the outside and the religion that stresses the inside.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/ritual-over-relationship/>  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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Through the years, the Jewish religion, in an attempt to keep man religiously and morally clean, had come up with thousands upon thousands of rules and regulations governing man's behavior.

<b>External religion</b> says be physically and morally clean.	<b>Internal religion</b> says be spiritually regenerated and made into a new creature.
<b>External religion</b> says that if a person keeps the outside clean, the inside will be clean.	<b>Internal religion</b> says that if a person is clean on the inside then he will keep the outside clean.
<b>External religion</b> develops a system of laws to govern behavior.	<b>Internal religion</b> behaves out of a heart of love and respect for God and man.
<b>External religion</b> says be faithful to religion (the church) and its practices and moral teachings and you will be clean.	<b>Internal religion</b> says be cleansed within by Christ, and you will be faithful to the church and live justly.
<b>External religion</b> is man-made religion of ritual, ceremony, laws, and works.	<b>Internal religion</b> is based upon His Son Jesus Christ who changes or recreates the heart of man. This act of recreation gives man a new heart, a heart that reaches out to both God and man in love and respect.

The conflict between these two religions is the conflict that was being waged between Christ and the religionists of His day.

## II. CONTRADICTION MATTHEW 15:3-6a

**15:3** But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition? Jesus answered with a question: charging the religionist of transgressing God's Commandment. It seems that they were breaking God's Law (His fifth Commandment Exodus 20:12) in order to keep their tradition. This is the first thing that defiles a man: traditional religion. Jesus goes on to give them an example.

**15:4** For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. Jesus gives them an illustration or example of God's Commandment: "*God says honor thy father and mother*"—honor parents. Parents are to be our main focus in every way of honor. To "**honor**" is to obey, to reverence, to speak kindly to, to speak, and think well of. To "**curse**" is to disobey, to treat with irreverence, to swear at, or to speak ill of. *For children*, it means to obey them; *for adults*, it means to support them. <sup>2</sup>God said that people should give honour to their parents. When parents need something (speaking of in their older years), their children have a responsibility to help them.

**15:5** But ye say, Whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me;— But the Pharisees had another tradition. They practiced the tradition of "*Corban*" which meant "*a gift.*" If a Jew wanted to escape from some financial responsibility, he would declare his goods to be Corban—a gift to God. They could put things aside, that their parents needed. Then they could say that they had given those things to God. Sometimes they only pretended to give these things to God. But this avoided the need to help their parents. We could see that in Ananias and Sapphira. In other words, their tradition says that once a person vows to give a gift to the temple, he can never back out of the vow, even if he later needs the gift to take care of his parents. The Pharisees and Scribes wanted to go to

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/matthew-lbw.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

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battle over traditions, yet they are breaking the Word of God (funny)! Incidentally, any time someone is ready to battle over church traditions or religious practices, he really does not understand the Word of God. If he understood the Word of God, he would realize that the traditions have nothing to do with pleasing God. Traditions are related only to pleasing men.

**15:6a** And honour not his father or his mother, he shall be free. Thereby practicing this tradition of the elders they thought that giving to the temple freed them from giving or showing honor to his or her parents, but just the opposite, it contradicted and dishonored their parents and it dishonored God's command.

## III. CONDEMNATION MATTHEW 15:6b-9

**15:6b** Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.<sup>3</sup> Thus they have rendered the command of God of no effect; without authority, null and void. There are traditions of men today with similar affect, such as the practice of sprinkling for baptism, a tradition of man. When one keeps the tradition of sprinkling, they make the command of God to be baptized (immersed) of no effect! Through keeping such traditions, one is actually rejecting the command of God!

**15:7** Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,— Jesus deals with people in two different ways. When He deals with the multitude, the harlots, prostitutes, thieves and other sinners, He confronts them in compassion and invites them to His salvation. But when He deals with the religious leaders, He approaches them with bluntness and hardness. This approach is obviously not going to win Him any friends. He confronts them directly by saying, "*You hypocrites*" (frauds; pretenders). Jesus has already said enough to set the Pharisees on edge, but He wants to be sure everybody knows what He is talking about because He goes all the way back to Old Testament times of the prophet Isaiah (Esaias).

**15:8** This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. In Isaiah 29:13, Isaiah's prophesy deals with the Jewish people only drawing near the Lord to honor Him with their mouths and with their lips, rather than their hearts. Their hearts were empty and far from the Lord.

**15:9** But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. It was an outward and intellectual place of worship taught by the precept of man. False teachers teach tradition— **their doctrine**: the precepts of men (*principle, rule, instruction*); their rituals, prayers, habits, ceremonies, as God's commandments rather than the instructions of God. And the result is vain worship. The Pharisees knew a lot about God but didn't know God. Being that it is only external, their worship was hypocritical (insincere and deceitful). A hypocrite acknowledges God and attends worship. They may study, witness, show care, help the needy, and keep the rules, but this is about all they do, for they do not really know God personally, not in the depths of their heart John 14:6.

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<sup>3</sup> [http://executableoutlines.com/matt/mt15\\_1.htm](http://executableoutlines.com/matt/mt15_1.htm)  
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sunday-school.html>

# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

## SUMMARY:

We open up by focusing attention on some key people: Pharisees and Scribes. They, in this case were hassling Jesus about not insisting that His disciples go through the ceremonial washing of their hands before eating food. They weren't concerned with the disciples not practicing good hygiene. They were upset because their tradition was kept (15:1-2).

The Lord's reply to their charge was with a question, asking them why they continued to break the direct command of God by failing to honor their father and mother. In escaping from their financial responsibilities, they would simply say that a particular item was a "*gift*" they had declared unto God and could not be used by an individual (their parents). This was simply a clever way of keeping things from passing to one's parents. This person would of course continue to keep those things in his own house for his own use. Thereby, practicing this tradition of the elders they thought that giving to the temple freed them from giving or showing honor to his or her parents (15:3-6a).

The Scribes and Pharisees made the Commandment of God of none effect by their traditions. Jesus said such actions were hypocritical. They used lip service, for their hearts were far from God. Their religion had become merely a set of man-made rules and their worship was a farce; it was in vain. They were teaching their traditions as God's Commandments (15:6b-9).



# PITWM VERSE BY VERSE

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