

Matthew 15

Title ideas:
The King Offends!
The King's Word Offend!
The King heals the blind!

Matthew 15:1-20 - The King heals the blind!

Scriptures:

^P
1 Then the scribes and Pharisees who were

Notes:

We all have blind spots in our life. These are things we just can't see, often because we don't know to look for them. While raising our children, Kelly would regularly tell me things about the kids that I hadn't seen. Things about their emotions or personality that I was oblivious to.

from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying,

All of us have spiritual blind spots. Blind spots can come from lack of experience, your own personality, lack of knowledge or faith. Spiritual blind spots obscure truth and God's will.

We all have them and that is why we need people around us who can help us to see what we cannot.

Scriptures:

1 John 1:9 - If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Hebrews 4:16 - Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

2 "Why do ¹² Your ¹² disciples transgress the

G3845 – disobey. "to transgress v. — to act in disregard of laws, commandments or promises, such as covenants."

Notes:

One trait of the spiritually blind is that they ask the wrong spiritual questions. Jesus had just performed two miracles that screamed out to the world that He was God-in-the-flesh. They are still in Gennesaret where everyone had brought their sick and Jesus healed them all!

tradition of the elders? For they do not wash

G3862 – the teachings. "tradition n. — a specific practice (of long standing) handed down from respected authorities."

G4245 - πρεσβύτερος (presbyteros) – ancestors.

There were so many other questions they could have asked Jesus in that moment. Instead of asking a question that would have led them to real faith in their Messiah, they interrogate Him regarding their religion.

People often reveal their spiritual blindness based on the questions they ask.

¹² their hands when they ¹² eat bread."

It is hard for those who can see to relate to those who are blind.

without those religious practices they weren't worshipping God.

As Christ-followers we don't have rituals for cleansing. Jesus gave us something that makes us perfectly clean – His blood (1 John 1:9).

In their minds what Jesus was doing by disregarding the traditions was to incite a revolution against God.

That cleansing makes us free to approach God knowing that He will receive us (Hebrews 4:16).

We have the tradition of 'Saying Grace' before we eat. Is it biblical? Yes. Both Jesus and the apostle Paul did it. Is it commanded in the Bible? No! It is a good practice to remind ourselves of God's grace, but you have not sinned against God if you don't pray for your meal.

In the minds of the scribes and Pharisees, the disciples were disobeying the traditions of the fathers and therefore were offending God. They were confronting Jesus about it because they were His disciples and they wanted to know if that was what He was teaching them.

To the religious Jews, worship of God had developed into a series of traditions and rituals. To them,

'...do not wash...' – This is not saying that the disciples ate their meals with filthy hands. This was referring to a ritual purification the religious Jews practiced prior to every meal. The problem that Jesus has with it is that it is not found anywhere in the Scriptures. The closest example is the purification of the priests before they perform service in the Temple.

The ritual of hand washing was part of an elaborate system of purification. It was born out of the truth that God is holy and to worship Him a person must be ritually cleansed. The Law of Moses detailed the things that made someone ritually defiled and included instructions on how to remove that defilement. Over the centuries, traditions were added that, on the surface, helped them to purify their worship of God.

Scriptures:

3 He answered and said to them, “Why do you

also transgress the commandment of God

G1785 – “command n. –
an authoritative direction
or instruction to do
something; through speech
or writing.”

because of your tradition?

G3862 -

Notes:

The Bible teaches us that Jesus was perfect in everything He did. He always did what was right and righteous. But He regularly broke the oral traditions of the fathers. Just a few examples are the people He touched – lepers, the woman with the flow of blood, and the dead. All those things were contrary to the oral traditions. And then He associated with tax collectors and sinners, even eating with them.

Jesus challenges their question with a question of His own. He asks them why they esteem the oral traditions over the written commands in the Scriptures.

Jesus is boldly saying that God’s commands are more important than the traditions of the ancestors. In fact, He will go on to give them an example where a tradition breaks God’s commandment.

They were pointing their finger at Jesus and His disciples and He pointed His back at them and accused them of something far worse than what they accused the disciples of.

God’s Word is not a book of fairy tales or self-help ideas. The Word of God is the foundational truth upon which reality can be rightly experienced and understood. If you replace God’s Word with anything, like man’s ideas or traditions, to begin to obscure the truth of God’s Word. That spiritual blindness makes it impossible to obey God and if you don’t obey God, you cannot please Him.

Tradition, over time, had grown in importance until it superseded Scripture in much of everyday life of the Jews. Jesus came along and seemed to ignore much of the traditions and simply lived in obedience to God’s commands. This is why the Jews had such a problem with Jesus. He did many things that pointed to the truth that he was the Messiah. But if the scribes and Pharisees accepted Jesus as the Messiah, their religion would have to go through a major overhaul. Unfortunately, pride wouldn’t allow them to do that.

Scriptures:

Exodus 20:12 - Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Exodus 21:17 -

⁴ For God commanded, saying, *'Honor your*

G1781 -

Notes:

'Honor...' – 5th Commandment (Exodus 20:12).

'He who curses...' – (Exodus 21:17).

father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses

father or mother, let him be put to death.'

Scriptures:

Mark 7:11-13 - But you say, 'If a man says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is Corban"—' (that is, a gift to God), 12 then you no longer let him do anything for his father or his mother, 13 making the word of God of no effect through your tradition which you have handed down. And many such things you do.

^P 5 But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or
mother,

Notes:

This is the tradition of Corban. While you were alive, you could pledge some or all of your wealth or possessions be given to God when you die. That sounds spiritual. The problem is that if someone didn't want to help their parents, they could simply claim Corban and then they weren't allowed to help their parents. Of course, they could continue to use the wealth selfishly for themselves until they died. It was a very wicked way to treat one's parents that was an accepted practice based on the oral traditions of their ancestors.

^{PARENTS}
"Whatever profit you might have received

G5623 – help, assistance.

from me is a gift to God—

G1435 – offering.

Scriptures:

⁶ then he need not honor his father or

mother.’ Thus you have made

the commandment of God of no effect by

your tradition.

G208 – nullify,
invalidate, make
void.

Notes:

Jesus is telling them that the tradition of Corban violated God’s law of love.

Trusting in unscriptural traditions always hurts people. Only someone spiritually blind would practice such a thing and teach others to do it also.

Jesus is not anti-tradition. He is simply opposed to traditions that break or ignore God’s commands. Humans naturally develop traditions – it is just how human culture works. They can be good and useful, but only to the degree that they agree with God’s commands.

Traditions in themselves are not evil; it is our dogmatic adherence to tradition at the expense of truth that is evil and wicked.

If you find yourself in a church where tradition is more important than the Word of God, than you must let them know how you feel and leave. Don’t follow the preacher; follow the Master and His Word. If the preacher isn’t following the Master, don’t follow the preacher!

Every church has traditions. CCFV has many traditions. We sing five praise and worship songs at the beginning of the service. We take the offering between worship and the message. We partake of the Lord’s Supper, Communion, on the second Sunday of the month.

Scriptures:

⁷ Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about

G5273 - ὑποκριτής (hypokritēs)
– pretender. “hypocrite (actor)
n. — a person who professes
beliefs and opinions that he or
she does not hold in order to
conceal his or her real feelings
or motives.”

you, saying:

Notes:

Whenever possible I try to give people the benefit of the doubt – I try to err on the side of grace. We might be tempted to give the scribes and Pharisees a break. After all, they are repeating what they have been taught. That is until Jesus calls them hypocrites. Their hearts are not right, and Jesus knows that.

Scriptures:
Isaiah 29:13 - Therefore the
LORD said:

“Inasmuch as these
people draw near with their
mouths
And honor Me with their
lips,
But have removed their
hearts far from Me,
And their fear toward Me
is taught by the
commandment of men...

8 *‘These people draw near to Me with their*

Notes:

mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their

heart is far from Me.

Scriptures:

9 *And in vain they worship Me, teaching as*

Notes:

doctrines the commandments of men.’ ”

Scriptures:

¹⁰ When He had called the multitude to

Notes:

Himself, He said to them, “Hear and

understand:

Scriptures:

¹¹ Not what goes into the mouth defiles a

Notes:

This was a radical thing for Jesus to say. The Law of Moses clearly stated there were things forbidden for the Jews to eat, like pork. Jesus is foreshadowing a conversation He is going to have with Peter in Acts 9.

man; but what comes out of the mouth, this

defiles a man.”

Scriptures:

12 Then His disciples came and said to Him,

Notes:
'offended' – we get the word scandalized from this word. The scribes and Pharisees were shocked by what Jesus said.

“Do You know that the Pharisees

were offended when they heard this saying?”

G4624 -
σκανδαλίζομαι
(skandalizomai) –
take offense.

Scriptures:

13 But He answered and said, “Every plant

Notes:
'plant' = false doctrine. Every false doctrine must be rejected and thrown aside. Just like an unwanted plant in the garden.

which My heavenly Father has not planted

will be uprooted.

Scriptures:

14 Let them alone. They are blind leaders of

G863 -

G5185 – not able
to understand.

G3595 - guides

Notes:

This is strong language from the Prince of Peace. Those who put their religion over the commands of Scripture are to be avoided and ignored. Leave them alone. Trust God to deal with them in His timing.

'blind' = those who are not able to understand because they are unwilling to yield their will to God. They are leading people who are also unwilling to respond to God.

the blind. And if the blind leads the blind, both

will fall into a ditch.”

Scriptures:

15 Then Peter answered and said to Him,

Notes:

“Explain this parable to us.”

Scriptures:

16 So Jesus said, "Are you also still

Notes:

without understanding?

G801 -

Scriptures:

17 Do you not yet understand that whatever

Notes:

enters the mouth goes into the stomach and

is eliminated?

Scriptures:
Matthew 12:34b-35 - For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. 35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

Proverbs 4:23 - Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life.

18 But those things which proceed out of the

G1607 – leave, go out of.

Notes:
Jesus tells His disciples that defilement comes from within their hearts not from the things that they eat or touch. You have probably heard me say this before, whatever is in your heart will come out in your speech and actions. It must because it is who you are. You might be able to hide it for a while but eventually everything that is in your heart will come out for the world to see (Matthew 12:34b-35).

King Solomon exhorted God's people to guard their heart (Proverbs 4:23).

mouth come from the heart, and they defile a

man.

Scriptures:

19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts,

G4190 – wicked. G1261 -

Notes:
This first might not be thought of as something the source of evil, wickedness, or sin.

The problem with the scribes and the Pharisees is an issue with their heart.

murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false

witness, blasphemies.

Scriptures:

Psalm 51:10 -

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Psalm 119:11 - Your word

I have hidden in my heart,
That I might not sin against You.

Psalm 139:23-24 -

Search me, O God, and know my heart;

Try me, and know my anxieties;

24 And see if there is any wicked way in me,

And lead me in the way everlasting.

James 5:16 - Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

²⁰ These are *the things* which defile a man,

but to eat with unwashed hands does not

defile a man.”

[Top of section](#) [Top of chapter](#)

Notes:

How do we keep our heart pure?

First, ask God to give you His heart ([Psalm 51:10](#)).

Second, fill your heart with God's Word ([Psalm 119:11](#)).

Third, ask God to reveal anything that might have a wrong place in your heart ([Psalm 139:23-24](#)).

One of the traditions in the church are three-point sermons. With that in mind, here is my fourth point.

Fourth, open your heart to others. Because we all have blind spots, we will need help seeing the things we are blind to. The New Testament has many 'one another' verses like 'love one another. One of the ways we do that is by letting people in and letting them help us to see our blind spots ([James 5:16](#)).

The scribes and Pharisees were spiritually blind. Standing in front of them was the power of God to open their eyes, but to be healed they had to reach out in faith and touch the hem of His garment.

We all have blind spots. One of the problems with blind spots – we can't see them. Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to heal us of any spiritual blindness we might have.