

Matthew 15

ASVh with Comments

Summary. This chapter highlights the contrast between the proud and the humble: the proud in themselves, the Pharisees and the scribes, who call themselves righteous, versus the humble ones, the poor, the oppressed, and the Canaanite woman, who accept that they are nobody. We see two extremes; on one end, the Pharisees and scribes, who are the leaders of the house of Israel, accuse the Lord Jesus of many things, and on the other end, a simple Canaanite woman who is not part of the house of Israel but comes and acknowledges the Lord Jesus as the Son of God and begs Him for help. Here, we see that the Lord grants mercy to anyone who has a humble heart and simple faith towards the Lord. The Lord Jesus has something important to say and show to each group of people in this chapter. 1) The Pharisees and scribes. The Lord Jesus confronts the Pharisees and scribes for breaking the commandments of God and calls them hypocrites and blind guides, saying, “You have made void the commandment of God because of your tradition.” 2) The disciples. The Lord Jesus teaches His disciples at every opportunity. He plainly tells His disciples that the Pharisees and scribes are blind leaders, and they should leave them alone and not follow them, “Let them alone; they are blind guides.” 3) Multitudes of poor and suffering people. The Lord Jesus and the disciples minister to large crowds. The Lord Jesus shows His mercy and compassion on them by healing and feeding them, “I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me already three days and have nothing to eat; and I am not willing to send them away not eating, lest they faint on the way.” 4) The Canaanite woman. This woman shows great faith and is humble in her heart and spirit. In conversing with her, the Lord Jesus says, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,” implying that He went to this region to call His lost sheep. However, the Lord shows that His love is extended to the Gentiles as well, for the few honest hearts who glorify the Lord. Thus, the Gentiles have been included in His mission.

15 ¹ Then there come to **Jesus** from Jerusalem Pharisees and scribes, saying,

Comments 15:1. The evil tried to stop the Lord’s plan, and they used whoever was willing to do the work for them. They wanted to disturb the work of the Lord, and they used the Pharisees and the scribes for this task.

² Why do **Thy** disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they **do** not wash the hands when they eat bread.

Comments 15:2. The Pharisees and the scribes used traditions to control people. That has been the way of teaching since previous generations, which they must keep. We see that the traditions of man control the order of God. Man’s commandments or God’s commandments; these people (Pharisees and Scribes) intentionally used man’s traditions, proclaiming them as God’s given commandments. They used men’s order above God’s order just to please men, not God. This was wrong to do, and it goes from generation to generation. That is why the Lord came to abolish the Law.

³ And **answering He** said to them, Why do **you** also transgress the commandment of **God** on account of your tradition?

⁴ For **God** said, Honor **your** father and **your** mother; and **the one speaking** evil of father and mother **must end in death.**

Comments 15:3-4. Here, the Lord Jesus quotes from the book of Exodus: [Exodus 20:12. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which Jehovah your God gives you. Exodus 21:17. And he that curses his father or his mother, shall surely be put to death.] People look at their father and mother as someone who will never harm them because they know their parents love and care for them. The first ones that they take advantage of and want to mistreat are their parents. But, when we are babies, our parents are the ones that take care of us. So, when they are old, it is our duty to take care of them. This is how the Lord God structured human life, which is why it is important to honor your parents and because the Lord God gave this commandment. It is the same towards God. Because the Lord’s love and mercy are great, and He is slow to anger, people take advantage of His love and disobey His commandments.

⁵ **However, you** say, whoever **may** say to **the** father or **the** mother, That **by which you might be** profited by me is given to **God,**

⁶ he might not honor his father. And you have made void the commandment of God because of your tradition.

Comments 15:5-6. This would be a promise by anyone to give, where the scribes and Pharisees would follow it, and they would have a portion from the promise. If the person who made the promise does not want to be kicked out of the synagogue, he must fulfill his promise, but this is not God's doing; it is man's doing. If you promise God something, the Lord will work into your heart to fulfill your promise. Then, you will give from your heart to God, and you will also honor your parents. But, when they do not want to honor their parents, they use God as a way out of honoring their parents. Instead of helping their parents, they use God to take that benefit for themselves. By devoting the portion to God, they think they honor God but at the same time profit themselves. But, if you cannot honor your parents who love you on this earth and you can see, how can you then honor God, whom you do not see? The Bible shows in other places that if you do not honor the ones that love you and you can see on this earth, then God is nothing for you (See, for example, 1 John 4:20-21). So, do not provide help to the parents just to show off and be praised by people; when honoring God by showing off, it is an empty benefit; there is no reward in heaven for doing this.

⁷ Hypocrites! Rightly Isaiah prophesied concerning you, saying,

⁸ This people honor Me with the lips;

However, their heart is kept far from Me.

⁹ But in vain they worship Me,

Teaching instructions the precepts of men.

Comments 15:3-9. This passage has a deeper meaning. The portion that you think would gain benefit to you by giving it to God, if in fact you would give it for helping your parents that it is considered in God's eyes as given to God (since it is God's commandment to honor your parents). They use God to dishonor their parents, which is the opposite of what God is teaching. God gave this commandment to honor your parents, but they reason that if they offer the portion to God instead, they will benefit for themselves as well, but if they give the portion to the parents, they don't benefit since the parents will use this gift, which is false.

¹⁰ And having call to Him the multitude, He said to them, Hear, and understand:

¹¹ Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man; but that which proceeds out of the mouth, this defiles the man.

Comments 15:11. See Verses 16-20.

¹² Then came the disciples saying to Him, Do Thou know that the Pharisees were offended, having heard the saying?

¹³ But He answered saying, Every plant which My Heavenly Father planted not shall be rooted up.

Comments 15:13. "Every plant which My Heavenly Father planted not shall be rooted up" refers to those souls that have given themselves to the darkness. These are disobedient souls; misled souls that choose to follow the darkness rather than the light, and this will show through their deeds. But the Lord gives every soul a chance for repentance on this earth through His Word because the Word is the true light, and this is the last chance for every soul. Remember that at the end times the Word will judge them.

¹⁴ Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a pit.

Comments 15:14. "Blind guides" here refers to Pharisees and scribes. In these days, the blind guides refer to leaders of the church who do not ask for the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead the people but use human doctrine to guide the house of God astray (See, for example, 2 Peter 3:16).

"The blind leads the blind." The blinds that are led are people who are coming to the church to look for excitement but not for worshipping the Lord in their hearts.

"Pit" or "ditch" refers to the palm of the evil one. In the spiritual world, the blind refers to souls that choose to follow the fallen angels instead of the true light of God.

¹⁵ Then answering Peter said to Him, Explain to us the parable.

¹⁶ And He said, Are you also still without understanding?

¹⁷ Perceive you not, that everything entering into the mouth passes into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

¹⁸ However, the things going forth out of the mouth come forth out of the heart; and these defile the man.

¹⁹ For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slander:

²⁰ These are what defile the person; but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile the person.

²¹ And Jesus went out from there, withdrawing into the district of Tyre and Sidon.

Comments 15:21. The Lord goes to this region to look for His people (See verse 24) who were trapped among the pagans. But even among pagans, there are souls that are seeking for the mercy of the Lord, as seen in this story of the Canaanite woman. Regardless of where they are, the Lord will go; even just for one soul, the Lord will go. The cry of the lost souls in the world was calling for the Lord; the Lord came for this reason: to save the lost. The Canaanite woman had a good heart toward the name of the Lord, and she went and spread the news about the Lord. The lost sheep of Israel in this region could hear her story and believe in the coming of the Lord and separate themselves.

²² And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region, having come out, was crying, saying, Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is grievously possessed by a demon.

Comments 15:22. This woman is humble with her heart and her spirit, not just with the action. She had not met the Lord until now, but she had heard about the Lord, and her heart was already convicted; she readily believed what she heard; she had blind faith. Here, she did not come to ask but to beg for the mercy of the Lord, and mercy has been given to her because of her sincere heart. When reading about this Canaanite woman, we need to ask ourselves, “Do we love our children to pray and beg for mercy for them from the Lord as this Canaanite woman did, whatever the situation may be?”

²³ And He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came begging Him, saying, Send her away; for she cries after us.

²⁴ And answering He said, I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Comments 15:24. This verse tells the purpose of the Lord Jesus’ travels to the region of Tyre and Sidon. In this region, there were Jews as well, and the Lord went there to search for them. They were trapped in their own thoughts and put themselves down; they forgot whom they belonged to, and their minds became weak, and they started to fear in the things humans made. Because they forgot who created them, so many have died in the darkness of their thoughts. The Lord has given the duty to parents to teach their children who they are, but the parents have failed them. The Lord’s mercy has come for His children first until the right time for the Gentiles will come. The number from the House of Israel must first be filled.

²⁵ But having come, she worshipped Him, saying, Lord, help me!

Comments 15:25. This woman came with a heart that admitted, by kneeling and worshiping, who the Lord Jesus is. Kneeling and worshiping is a sign of humbleness and acceptance of the authority of the Lord. She knelt down in humbleness and paid respect to her Lord, and that is why the mercy of the Lord has been poured on her.

²⁶ And answering, He said, It is not proper to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.

Comments 15:26. “Children” here refers to the Jews. The Lord Jesus came for the Jews first, and the mercy of the Lord must be poured down on the Jews first. But also, those whose hearts are open will receive a portion of His mercy.

“Bread” here refers to the Lord’s mercy and grace. The grace of God has come down according to the promise of the Father to the Jews first. But the Lord Jesus Himself is an extension of love and mercy to the Gentiles as well, by the will of the Father, to save the whole world through Him.

“The dogs” here refers to the Gentile people; however, do not be offended that the Gentiles are referred to as “dogs” because the dogs eat straight from the master’s table.

²⁷ But she said, Yes, Lord; for even the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.

Comments 15:27. In this passage, this woman is not offended; but instead, she is submissive and humble. By acknowledging that the dogs eat “the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table,” she acknowledges the Lord Jesus as her master and Lord and that she is willing to stay under the authority of the Lord.

²⁸ Then answering, Jesus said to her, O woman, great is your faith! Be it to you even as you desire. And her daughter was healed from that hour.

Comments 15:28. The Canaanite woman is an example of humbleness, faithfulness, and love. She is not just humble in heart but in spirit as well. The humble in heart are the ones that come and expect to receive worldly blessings from the Lord. The humble in spirit are the ones that are willing first to give love and worship to the Lord. So, she worshiped the Lord from her heart and expected healing for her daughter; she believed that the Lord could do the healing.

²⁹ And **having departed from there, Jesus went along** the sea of Galilee; and **having gone up on** the mountain, **He** sat there.

³⁰ And **approached Him** great multitudes, having with them lame, **crippled**, blind, **mute**, and many others, and they **placed** them down at **His** feet; and **He** healed them;

Comments 15:29-30. This paragraph shows what people have heard about the Lord Jesus and that they believe that the Lord can do what they have heard. It was not easy for people to carry their sick to the Lord on the mountain, and the Lord had mercy on them.

³¹ insomuch that the multitude **marveled, seeing mute** speaking, **crippled** whole, and lame walking, and blind seeing; and they glorified the **God** of Israel.

Comments 15:30-31. Here, it is a confirmation for the majority of people; they heard about the Lord Jesus' miracles, but now a multitude of people have seen. Now the word about the Lord Jesus will spread wider because not a few have seen, but a large amount of people. The glory of God has been witnessed through the multitude of people, and the word will spread speedily that God has come down among humans. God does not sit on His throne watching, but God has come down and witnessed the suffering of people, and He will show mercy and carry all their suffering (See Matthew 8:17). However, they misunderstood the mission of the Lord Jesus on Earth; He did not come to take away their suffering but to give them the good news. The Lord Jesus takes part in their suffering and knows what humans go through. Humans will still face suffering, but in their hearts, they can be joyful that God knows about their suffering. We are to look for the world to come, not for this earthly world; come and join and be part of the next world where all the suffering is gone.

³² Then **Jesus** having called **His** disciples, said, **I** have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with **Me** already three days and have nothing to eat; and **I** am not **willing to** send them away **not eating, lest** they faint on the way.

Comments 15:32. Q: Were the feedings of multitudes described in the Gospel of Matthew different events happening in different places? **A:** The logical answer is that there was a gap of time between the feeding miracles and a gap of places. This miracle is not in the same place and time as the one from Chapter 14. Only on a few occasions did the Lord stop longer in one place. The purpose of the Lord's coming to earth was to preach the Word, and the Word cannot be preached in one spot only. He traveled all the time. This here is a different place, a different area, but the Bible shows that the speed the human tongue can travel is faster than we can imagine. Before the Lord Jesus reached this place, the word about Him had already been there to make the hearts of people wait for Him. The Lord has come here to confirm and strengthen the good news that God has come among humans. Because the Holy Spirit has not been given yet, the Lord used the human tongue (word of mouth) to spread the good news.

"I am not willing to send them away ... on the way." This passage clearly shows the compassion and mercy the Lord has for people. The Lord's mercy is always there for those who follow Him (including us). He is unwilling to send the people away until they have something to eat.

³³ And the disciples say **to Him, From where to us** so many loaves in a desert place, as to **feed** so great a multitude?

Comments 15:33. Q: How was it possible that the disciples forgot about the previous feeding miracle? **A:** Doubt is a human weakness, and when you put too many people together, if one has doubt, then someone else will start to have doubt as well. The surroundings played tricks on the eyes; when surroundings change, fear and doubt come. When miracles come often, it makes the human heart believe that it is so easy to get whatever the heart wants, even if the need is not there. Then, laziness plays in the human heart, and doubt will come. Laziness makes us ask things from the Lord that He will not do, and then we develop doubt when a miracle situation is really there. It is hard for us humans to believe the miracle of multiplying a bit of food to feed such a multitude of people, so doubt comes first. Most likely, the disciples expected to see the Lord change something else, such as rocks, into food, not multiply food from food.

³⁴ And **Jesus** says to them, How many loaves **do you** have? And they said, Seven, and a few small fishes.

Comments 15:34. **Q:** Why did the Lord need the loaves and the fish? **A:** The fact that the Lord used bread and fish in different amounts each time He performed the food multiplication miracles does not have any hidden or deep meaning. This miracle was simply a miracle of multiplication of food, and the Lord needed food to multiply it. Bread and fish were common food and clean; that is why the Lord multiplied these elements to be food to feed the multitudes. The amount of bread and fish does not matter for the Lord in order to multiply the food. The food multiplication miracles were done for the disciples and the chosen ones among the people to show them that the Lord Jesus is the Lord over life on earth as well and to strengthen their faith. These miracles will become the talk among them and will lift up their faith in times of trouble when the Lord Jesus is not with them.

³⁵ And **He** commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground;

³⁶ **having taken** the seven loaves and the fishes and **having given** thanks, **He broke**, and gave to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitudes.

Comments 15:34-36. In this place, the Lord multiplied the bread and the fish and fed the multitude of people in the same way as He did in Matthew 14 (See Comments Matthew 14:19). The small pieces of bread and fish the Lord broke became whole new loaves and whole new fishes in His hands. Then the Lord Jesus placed them in the baskets in front of Him and the disciples took the baskets filled with food and distributed the food to the people who were sitting down on the ground.

“And having given thanks.” The Lord Jesus is God of all things; all things were created through Him, but still, the Lord Jesus gives thanks to the Father for giving all things to humans and Him on earth. The Lord has shown to His disciples that He always gives thanks to the Father, who is the Creator of all things (Our God is Three in One: the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit).

³⁷ And all ate and were **satisfied**; and they took up that **being over and above** of the broken pieces, seven baskets full.

Comments 15:37. “Were satisfied.” Satisfied or filled is eating until you cannot eat anymore (See Comments Matthew 14:20).

“Seven baskets full.” Here, we have simply seven baskets of leftover food. There is no hidden meaning for the number seven or twelve in Chapter 14. People use these numbers to make a doctrine. However, these baskets are just simply leftover food. The Lord gave enough food for all that were there, and the leftover food shows the large amount of food that the Lord multiplied.

³⁸ And **those eating** were four thousand men, besides women and children.

Comments 15:38. The meaning here is in the verse itself. But we should try to make a mental picture of the large amount of people that the Lord ministered to during these three days. We should think how hard it was for the Lord and the disciples to go around four thousand plus people, pray, heal, and teach them. The Lord and the disciples probably had no sleep, no time to eat, and no rest.

³⁹ And **having dismissed** the multitudes, **He** entered into the boat and came **to the region** of Magadan.

Comments 15:39. The Lord did not just say goodbye to the people. The Lord reminded them to remember what they have seen and heard in these few days and cherish this time they spent with the Lord.

“... and came to the region of Magadan (or Magdala).” This verse shows that the Lord kept going, and that is the purpose the Lord came to earth. He will keep going to places where people did not travel to give everybody the light. That is the purpose for Him to come to earth, to give the light and show the way to all humans.

Life and Faith Applications. 1) Glorify the Father and honor Him from your heart, not just with your lips or for the sake of traditions. 2) Do not be willing to work against the Lord Jesus; pray and watch so you do not follow the doctrines of men, as there are many false teachings in the world. 3) Pray at all times, repent, and watch your heart so you do not become defiled; always go back to the teachings of the Bible. 4) Showing compassion on the poor and suffering that is the heart of our Lord Jesus. 5) Love your children and pray honestly for them with a humble heart and spirit, and the mercy of the Lord will be given to you. 6) Pray so you understand when it is time for miracles and when it is not. Check your heart for the mercy of the Lord because the Lord will speak first in your heart when it is time for a miracle to come.