

# Sermon Notes – February 24, 2019

## Review

- ⇒ Two weeks ago in Matthew 13 we listened in on Jesus' seven parables of the Kingdom, and in doing so, heard words of encouragement (God's Kingdom IS growing and one day His Kingdom will come in it's fulness) and words of warning (don't be among those who willfully refuse to believe Jesus).
- ⇒ Last week we saw a sharp contrast between an unrepentant man with a truly guilty conscience, and hungry, fearful, & needy people who came to Jesus – and no one was turned away!

## Today's Text: Matthew 15

There are several key ways in which genuine concern for a lost world shows up. Evangelism is certainly a priority, but there is also a place for compassionate acts of kindness and defending the spiritually-vulnerable from all the hungry sharks in the water.

## We Need A Clean Heart, Not Just Clean Hands!

(15:1-20)

- ⇒ In this text Jesus continues His increasingly hostile encounters with the religious rulers who pride themselves on external rules & amazing minutia! They even have debates on how *much* \_\_\_\_\_ a person must use for ceremonial hand washing. No, seriously!
- ⇒ Jesus sees through their façade and beats them at their own game (3-9). Please note: \_\_\_\_\_ themselves aren't bad; it's just when they contradict God's Word that it gets ugly.
- ⇒ Jesus always seems to focus on the \_\_\_\_\_, not the \_\_\_\_\_ alone. Once again, He emphasizes that we need change in our hearts, not simply washing for our hands (12:34).
- ⇒ Can you imagine? "*Your biggest problem before God is that you don't wash your hands right!*" If it was only that simple...and if it WAS only that simple, we wouldn't need much of a Savior! An \_\_\_\_\_-focused religion minimizes the true nature of our sinful human condition.

The Heart of the Savior Beats for a LOST World  
Matthew 15:1-39  
Pastor Jay Mosser

## The Jewish Messiah Invites the Nations to the Banquet!

(15:21-39)

- ⇒ Jesus is now in a predominately Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) region as He heads around the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee (the Decapolis)! The three stories in this section move from an individual, to a great crowd (hundreds?), and then to a really LARGE crowd (thousands!).
- ⇒ The BIG question is this: How will the Jewish Messiah interact with the \_\_\_\_\_? After all, Jesus' kingdom message is indeed focused on Israel at this point.
- ⇒ First, we meet a woman from a group historically opposed to God's people. Jesus' disciples seem to be bothered by her (23; also, remember the love in Luke 9:54?). But what's going on with Jesus? According to Don Richardson of "Peace Child" fame, there may be a " \_\_\_\_\_ " going on... (listen carefully as Pastor Jay explains!)
- ⇒ Next, Jesus extends " \_\_\_\_\_ " of healing – to this non-Jewish audience! This is like a prelude to Matthew 28 & Acts 1-2!
- ⇒ Finally, just as Jesus fed a hungry Jewish crowd because He had compassion on them, so here He feeds a hungry non-Jewish crowd because He has compassion on them too, refusing to send them away hungry!

## Response to God's Word

- ⇒ Before we're ready to accept God's offer of forgiveness in Christ, WE need to agree with God that our biggest problem isn't that we don't wash our hands correctly! In fact, our biggest problem isn't simply an easily fixed, eternal, behavioral thing! Our biggest problem is our sinful heart – for you & I both need a great Savior!
- ⇒ In Luke 14 we hear Jesus telling the story of a great banquet. Many of those who are invited make excuses for why they can't possibly come. Clearly, God is the gracious master inviting people to His Royal Banquet! How have you responded to His invitation?

# Community Group Notes

## Getting Started

This coming week we welcome the month of March! That means turning the clock ahead, celebrating St. Patrick's Day, & the official start of spring! What are YOU looking forward to in the coming month?

## Talking It Through

1. Review the sermon from Sunday: Read the entire text (Matthew 15:1-39) and review the main sermon points from your notes. What was it about?
2. Based on 15:1-20: Some of us have experience with people who focus largely on externals in the pursuit of holiness – and it's easy to tell horror stories about them & point out the flaws in their thinking. But why do you think people end up thinking so much in terms of externals? How might we focus on the heart and still define boundaries? Can we do both...or is that a slippery slope toward a "list-writing" approach to holiness?
3. The story of Jesus interacting with the Canaanite woman often draws discussion. Was Jesus being harsh? Did He really refer to her as a household pet ("dog")? What was Jesus' point, and did Pastor Jay's explanation on Sunday help clear the air...or not so much?
4. This text finds Jesus, the Jewish Messiah, focusing His ministry attention largely on a Gentile audience for a season as He travels along the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee – kind of like a short-term mission trip. How do you think His (Jewish) disciples felt about this whole thing (keep in mind Luke 9:54!)? What lessons do you think they may have been learning?

## Taking It Further & Taking It Home

The early followers of Jesus – mainly with a Jewish heritage – struggled to welcome the Gentile crowd into fellowship. Sometimes it was just uncomfortable; at other times the differences between them caused more serious problems. The NT tells this story in numerous places, for example in Acts 10-11 and 15, then again in Galatians 2:11-14.

How has your understanding of the gospel affected how YOU approach people who are different from you in culture, lifestyle, national background, or faith?

It has been said that the gospel is God's answer to divisions between people (See Ephesians 2:11-22). How *should* that be true? AND, why is it that, even in the name of the gospel, sometimes it hasn't been that way?

## Time to PRAY

(Or do this at the beginning of your group time)

Take time to share prayer requests that relate to the people in your group, and then pray for those needs.

**Next Sunday Worship: March 3, 2019**

**"A Great Confession & A Great Exchange"**

(Matthew 16:1-28)

Ben McCardell

**Answer Key:** • water • traditions • internal • external • externally • nations • wink • kingdom blessings •