

BIBLE READING DAY 19, THURSDAY: MARCH 17

Jesus Condemns Hypocrisy

Matthew 15:12–20; Mark 7:1–16

The Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem came together to Jesus. For they had noticed that some of his disciples ate their food with “defiled” (that is, unwashed) hands.

For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they first wash their hands, carefully observing the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the market, they do not eat unless they first bathe. And there are many other traditions which they carefully observed, such as the washing of cups and pitchers and bronze vessels.

The Pharisees and scribes asked Jesus, “Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?”

*Jesus replied, “Isaiah rightly prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, **‘This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men.’** Casting aside the commandment of God, you hold fast the tradition of men!*

“You have a wonderful way of setting aside the commandment of God in order to observe your tradition! For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘Whoever speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.’ But you say, ‘If a man says to his father or mother, “Everything of mine which might have been used for your assistance is Corban”’—then you excuse him from doing anything more for his father or mother, thus making the word of God void by your tradition which you have handed down. And you do many such things.”

Then Jesus called the multitude to him again and said, “Hear me now, all of you, and understand this. There is nothing outside a man which can defile him by entering into him. But the things which come out of the man are the things which defile him.”

Then the disciples came to Jesus and said, “Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard what you said?”

But Jesus answered, “Every plant which my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled—root and all. Let them alone. They are blind guides, and if a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a ditch.”

Then Peter said to Jesus, “Explain the parable to us.”

“Are you, too, still without understanding?” asked Jesus. “Do you not understand that everything that enters the mouth goes into the stomach and is expelled as waste? But the things that come forth out of the mouth come from the heart, and these things defile a man. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, perjuries, blasphemies—these are the things that defile a man. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man.”

Jesus Ministers to Gentiles, Matthew 15:21–31; Mark 7:31–37

Then Jesus left Capernaum and withdrew into the country of Tyre and Sidon. And a Canaanite woman of that region came to him, crying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is completely demon possessed.”

But Jesus made no reply. And his disciples came to him and implored him, saying, “Send her away, for she keeps following us and crying out.”

But Jesus replied, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Then the woman came and fell at his feet, saying, “Lord, help me!”

But he replied, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”

“That is true, Lord,” she said, “yet the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.”

“O woman, great is your faith!” replied Jesus. “It shall be as you wish.”

And from that hour, her daughter was healed.

And journeying on from the region of Tyre, Jesus passed through Sidon into the region of Decapolis, near the Sea of Galilee. And they brought him a man who was deaf and had an impediment in his speech and begged him to lay his hand on him. And when he had taken him aside from the crowd, Jesus spat and touched the man’s tongue with his saliva and put his fingers in the man’s ears. Then, looking up to heaven, he sighed, and said to him, “Be opened!” And his ears were opened, and his tongue was loosed, and he began to talk plainly.

Then Jesus charged them not to tell anyone; but the more he admonished them, the more they told it. And they were greatly astonished, and said, “He has done everything well—he even makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak!”

And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the dumb, and many others. And they laid them at his feet, and he healed them. Then the crowd was amazed when they saw the dumb speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing; and they praised the God of Israel.

Jesus Feeds a Multitude, Matthew 15:32–39

Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, “I have compassion on the multitude, for they have been with me three days now, and have nothing to eat. I will not send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way.”

“Where can we get enough bread in this wilderness to feed such a crowd?” said the disciples.

“How many loaves have you?” asked Jesus.

“Seven,” they replied, “and a few small fish.”

Then Jesus commanded the crowd to sit down on the ground and took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks. And he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. And they all ate and were satisfied; and they gathered up seven baskets full of the broken pieces that were left. Those who ate numbered four thousand men, besides women and children. Then Jesus sent the crowds away and got into the boat and went to the region of Magdala.

Blind Man Healed at Bethsaida, Mark 8:22–26

They came to Bethsaida, and some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. And Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. When he had spit on his eyes and laid his hands on him, he asked, “Can you see anything?”

He looked up and said, “I can see the people—they look like trees walking about.”

Then Jesus laid his hands on his eyes again, and the man stared intently, and was restored and saw everything clearly. Then Jesus sent him away to his home, saying, “Be sure you don’t go into the village.”

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 st Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	1 st Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	FINAL PASSOVER
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DEVOTIONAL DAY 19 (THURSDAY MARCH 17)

When Our Faith Shall Be Sight

Based on Matthew 15:12–39; Mark 7:1–16, 31–37; 8:22–26

In 1895, Clara Scott wrote the hymn “Open My Eyes, That I May See”. In the three verses she penned, she asks for four things from the Lord:

1. Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth Thou hast for me. Place in my hand the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.
2. Open my ears that I may hear voices of truth Thou sendest clear, and while the wave notes fall on my ear, ev’rything false will disappear.
3. Open my mouth and let me bear gladly the warm truth ev’rywhere. Open my heart and let me prepare love for Thy children thus to share.

Clara’s prayer of faith is found in the chorus, “Silently now I wait for Thee, ready, My God, Thy will to see. Open my eyes (ears and mouth), illumine me, Spirit divine! “

In the Scripture reading today, we see Clara’s song illustrated by the Pharisees, disciples, a Canaanite woman, people sick and in need, and a blind man.

First, we see Jesus correcting the Pharisees’ legalistic concerns. The Pharisees were not concerned with true purity and holiness before God, but only what made them look good and pious before men. Jesus would tell His disciples that the Pharisees were blind to God’s truths. If one followed the Pharisees’ teachings, they would only end up in disaster by *“falling into a ditch”*. While the Pharisees had no desire to see God’s truths, Jesus wanted His disciples to see that holiness is a matter of the heart.

So how does Jesus help His disciples move from spiritual blindness to spiritual sight? In the following series of events, Jesus shows His disciples that faith brings sight. Jesus first uses a Canaanite woman to illustrate. The woman is not a Jew, and, therefore, to the disciples she is just a nuisance. So, they ask Jesus to send her away. While Jesus does not comply with the disciples’ request, He speaks to the woman about His mission to the Jews. But the woman persists and humbles herself saying that *“even the little dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the Master’s table”*. Jesus proclaims that this woman’s great faith has brought healing to her daughter.

As Jesus journeys on, He heals a man with a speech impediment. This causes even more of the Jewish people by faith to bring sick, lame, maimed, blind, and dumb people for Jesus to heal. Jesus wants His disciples to understand who He truly is and to have faith in Him. He teaches this by showing His miraculous power in the feeding of 4,000 men plus those with them. Once more, in today’s closing Scripture passage, Jesus demonstrates His ability to heal the blind.

Faith is key for the Christian believer. Without faith, our own understanding convinces us to fall into false beliefs or practices like the Pharisees. Faith makes the difference. It wasn’t who the Canaanite woman was or was not that healed her daughter. It wasn’t anything the man with the speech impediment, the blind man, or any of those Jesus healed did that made them well. It was faith.

So today, may Clara Scott’s song be our prayer: “Open my eyes that I may see God’s truth, not my own. Open my ears that I may hear the Spirit’s direction for my life. Open my mouth and my heart that I may share the truth of Jesus Christ to all those that cross my path.” By faith, Lord Jesus, do this in our lives. Amen.

--By Stan Dickard

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs

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