

## *SITTING AT THE FEET OF JESUS*

### Jesus Moves Toward the Gentiles    Matthew 15:1–16:12

*“But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart....”* Matthew 15:18a

#### Day 1: Read Matthew 15:1-9.

1. The teachers and the Pharisees are teaming up together to try to trap Jesus in what they see as his failure to be a “good” rabbi. These two groups are not usually united in anything. What might be their reason for coming together now to accuse Jesus?
  
2. The teachers and the Pharisees accuse the disciples of breaking the tradition of the elders (vv. 1, 2), a body of rules and regulations added by man after the original law was given (v. 9). Jesus replies to them in true rabbinical fashion, with a question. What issue is he trying to get at? (v. 3)
  
3. In the gospel of Matthew, Jesus uses the word “hypocrite” twelve times. A hypocrite can be thought of as a play actor. Earlier in this book, (6:2, 5, 16), Jesus refers to giving, praying and fasting when calling the Jews hypocrites. What makes him call them hypocrites now? (15:8) How have his criticisms escalated?
  
4. When Jesus refers to Isaiah 29:13 (15:8, 9) what is the hypocrisy that Jesus points out? What is it that Jesus truly desires? (Jn. 4: 23, 24)

#### Day 2: Read Matthew 15:10-20.

5. Jesus uses the confrontation by the teachers as a teaching opportunity. What are some evidences of an unclean heart? (vv. 18-20)
  
6. People normally blame their situations for their sinful reactions. Where does Jesus say these reactions actually come from?
  
7. How can you hope to have any good come from your sinful heart? (Ezek.36:25-29a; 1 Cor. 6:9-11)
  
8. Jesus calls the Pharisees and teachers blind guides. How is Jesus a different type of guide? (Isa. 42:16; Jn. 8:12; Jn. 14:6)

#### Day 3: Read Matthew 15:21-28.

9. How would you describe this woman?

10. Jesus' response to this Gentile woman seems uncharacteristic. What could be the reason for Jesus' behavior?

What do you think Jesus is referring to when he speaks of "the children's bread" and "their dogs" (v. 26)?

11. How do the statements of the Canaanite woman reflect her understanding of who Jesus really is?
12. Contrast the disciples' response to Jesus' teaching in verses 15 and 16 with the woman's response to Jesus in verse 27. For what is she commended?

**Day 4: Read Matthew 15:29-39.**

13. We find Jesus once again on a mountainside working many miracles. What effect do these miracles have on the crowds? (v. 31) How do they point to Jesus' divinity? (Ps. 72:18, 19; Isa. 35:3-6)
14. Jesus fed a crowd of 5,000 (14:13-21) and now he feeds a crowd of 4,000. Why? (14:14; 15:32)
15. How does Jesus' response to the disciples (v. 34a) demonstrate his patience and love for them?

How have you seen Jesus' compassion, love and patience manifested in your life recently? How can you praise him?

**Day 5: Read Matthew 16:1-12.**

16. Will they never give it a rest! Even after all Jesus has done, the Pharisees and Sadducees now come asking for a sign from heaven.
- What is the sign that Jesus says will be shown to them?
  - How does Jonah's experience point to the death and resurrection of Jesus? (Jonah 1:17; 2:1-6, 10; Mt. 12:39-41)
17. In the New Testament yeast is almost always a symbol of evil and corruption.
- What effect does a little bit of yeast have on dough?
  - Why do you think Jesus warns his disciples to be "on guard against the yeast of the Pharisees" (v. 11)?
  - Think of a time when you had a distorted understanding of God's truth. How did he rescue you from that? What effect did the change in your thinking have on your relationship with God and others?